

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY REFORMS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CLEAN AIR, WETLANDS, PRIVATE PROPERTY
AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

JULY 23, 1998

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FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY REFORMS

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 1998

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR, WETLANDS, PRIVATE
PROPERTY, AND NUCLEAR SAFETY,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9 a.m. in room 406, Senate Dirksen Building, Hon. James M. Inhofe (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Inhofe, Hutchinson, Sessions, Graham, and Chafee [ex officio].

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Senator INHOFE. The committee will come to order.

We'll call this meeting to order. Unfortunately, as I told James Lee, we're going to have one vote at 9:15 and then we may have another one at 9:40. If we do, we'll keep going through 9:30, go over to vote twice and come back. Unfortunately, I also have a conflict with the Senate Armed Services Committee and I will have to be going back and forth between the two.

Today's hearing is an oversight hearing on the Federal Emergency Management Agency and, specifically, to draft FEMA reform legislation. It is drafted by myself, Senator Bob Graham, who is the ranking member of this subcommittee. I would like to thank him for his work, and I know that down in Florida they have lots of problems with extreme weather.

James Lee, you've had to go to Florida on numerous occasions because of hurricanes and floods. In Oklahoma we have tornadoes and floods, and then of course our disaster in Oklahoma City. This would be a good time to say that James Lee Witt has been one of my favorite people for a long time. When we had our terrible disaster in Oklahoma City at the Murrah Federal Office Building, he spent down a lot of time there, which was so appreciated by all of us in Oklahoma.

Concerning this legislation we are considering today, we are going to do a markup in another week or so. It has two main titles: the first authorizes the Predisaster Hazard Mitigation Program to help communities plan for disasters before they happen as opposed to reacting to them afterwards. The second title provides for a

number of streamlining and cost reduction measures, which will help bring in line the funds Congress ends up appropriating.

Project Impact is an innovative program in which FEMA is working with local communities to help them prepare for disasters. It's interesting when you look and see that so many of these things are predictable. I was surprised to find out that a percentage of these disasters that can actually be predicted. We can be much more effective in disaster aid if we are able to prepare for them in advance.

Our draft legislation authorizes funding for the program for 5 years with a sunset at the end of the period. We do have our funding in this legislation on the basis of \$50, \$40, \$30, and \$20 million over that 5-year period. There may be some discussion on this and some differences of opinion, but I, as chairman of this committee, feel very strongly that we're going to be able to adhere to that.

[The prepared statement of Senator Inhofe follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Today's hearing is an oversight hearing on the Federal Emergency Management Agency and specifically on draft FEMA reform legislation that has been circulated by myself and the subcommittee ranking member Senator Graham.

I would like to thank Senator Graham for his work and effort on this issue. I know with the floods and hurricanes in Florida that the Federal Emergency Response Program is very important to him and the State of Florida. It is also important to the State of Oklahoma with our tornadoes and floods. In addition, FEMA was very responsive in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing.

The draft legislation that we are considering today has two main Titles. The first authorizes the Predisaster Hazard Mitigation Program. This Program helps communities plan for disasters before they strike which will reduce the post hazard costs associated with disasters. The second Title provides a number of streamlining and cost reduction measures which will help bring in' to line the funds Congress ends up appropriating through Supplemental Budgets every time we have a major disaster.

I would like to spend a few minutes discussing two key provisions in the Predisaster Mitigation Program that I believe are very important. They relate to the Project Impact Program which we will be hearing more about from Director Witt and the other witnesses.

Project Impact is an innovative program where FEMA is working with local communities to help them prepare for disasters. It began last year with seven pilots and was expanded this year to include one Project Impact community in every State.

Our draft legislation authorizes funding for the program for 5 years, with a sunset at the end of the 5-years. Based on the costs of the first 50 pilots, the funds authorized will pay for an additional 300 communities. Although I do not expect FEMA to fund 300 new Project Impact sites. Instead I expect FEMA to work on how best to devolve this program to the local communities over the next 5 years. If this program is going to be successful than it must evolve into a State and locally run program.

Some may question why a sunset for a program like this is necessary, so let me explain. In the legislation we require the GAO to conduct a study of the program and report back to the Congress in 3 years. We also ask FEMA to report back on the success of the program. It is my intent that these reports make specific recommendations for the next phase of Project Impact. The House legislation only authorizes Project Impact for 3 years, I felt it was necessary to authorize the program for 5 years which will give Congress plenty of time to authorize the next phase of Project Impact.

This program can not be another Federal bureaucratic program that continues to mushroom without clear direction and with escalating costs. At this point no one has enough experience to predict how this program should look in 5 years. As FEMA says, this is not just another big government program, and Congress should not treat it as one.

The funding levels in the draft bill are consistent with the plan to have 50 sites selected this year and another 50 sites next year. The current appropriated level

for the 50 sites this year was \$25 million. Next year we authorize up to \$50 million. We also include sufficient funding over the remaining years to select additional sites if needed to highlight specific geographic areas or specific mitigation plans, along with the funding needed to begin the Revolution.

At today's hearing we have with us the Director of FEMA, James Lee Witt and representatives of States and local governments who will provide their views and perspectives on the draft Bill and FEMA in general.

With that, I would recognize the Senator from Arkansas, Senator Hutchinson.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM HUTCHINSON,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ARKANSAS**

Senator HUTCHINSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your calling this hearing and your leadership on these issues. I want to also take the opportunity to participate today. I know it's a very busy, busy time with floor activity. I appreciate the hard work that you've done and the hard work that Senator Graham has done in producing legislation that continues Project Impact which will continue to prepare communities to mitigate damages from natural disasters.

I'll just also add that it's always good to see James Lee Witt and, as a fellow Arkansan, be able to visit with him. Like you, he's one of my favorite people. I think he's done an outstanding job at FEMA and I want to applaud him. When he took over FEMA 5 years ago it was less than a respected organization. I think probably apart from the IRS it was one of the least popular Federal agencies. I think James Lee Witt deserves great credit in turning that around. I understand that at the time he took that agency, if you wore a FEMA T-shirt or jacket it was a dangerous thing to do. I know that's not the case anymore.

Last year when tornadoes ripped through Arkansas, FEMA I think gets an A-plus grade. Their reaction was outstanding. People were receiving checks within days of the disaster. At times, it is difficult to identify owners of property because of handshake sales, yet to my knowledge, there was little or no complaint in the filling out of requests. It's been an outstanding turnaround for what is a very important agency to our country. When we had the Fort Smith tornado, it was the year prior to that, FEMA was right there and once again did an outstanding job.

Today, we're considering the direction of Project Impact. I think it is one of the most important missions today of FEMA. In Eastern Arkansas, as Mr. Witt knows, we have one of the largest earthquake faults in the country which has the potential of destroying nearly everything in its path. Because there has been such little activity along that fault for the last 150 years, we're faced with a big problem. We have a huge fault with a huge destructive potential but it has laid virtually dormant for such a long period that when it finally does break the destruction could be beyond imagination. And unlike California which has been hit with earthquakes continually for years, those along the fault have made little preparation for seismic activities. So if an earthquake were to hit right now, there would be no bridge across the Mississippi from St. Louis all the way down to Southern Arkansas near Louisiana. Memphis would virtually be destroyed as would much of Eastern Arkansas.

So with these concerns as well as the yearly threat of tornadoes, preparation for disaster mitigation is of paramount importance. I want to express my concern for Project Impact. I appreciate the work that has been done to reauthorize this program for another 5 years. There is a sunset provision, I think that's fine and I support the chairman in that. I think there is no intent to end that program, though we need to reevaluate, as with any program such as this, to ensure that over the course of the next 5 years the direction of the program continues to be what it should be. But I do think we have to be careful with an inadvertent ending of what I think is a very, very important programs.

I look forward to working with the chairman and the ranking member in the reauthorization of Project Impact. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Senator Hutchinson.

We have two panels. The first panel will be just one individual but he is accompanied by two of his associates, the Director of FEMA, James Lee Witt. In the second panel we will have four individuals, one from Oklahoma, Albert Ashwood, a very fine individual, and Hal Daub—is Hal here yet? There you are. Hal used to have in the House of Representatives the office next to me. Some of you people with Hal probably don't even know that he was considered to be the Father of the Notch Babies when he was here.

[Laughter.]

Senator INHOFE. So with that, we will introduce Mr. Witt for any comments he would like to make. Your written statement will be submitted for the record in its entirety.

We will have other Senators coming in. All of the members are represented here by their staff who will report back. But I think we're going to have other members coming in. I have to say that this meeting is being held simultaneously with another Environment and Public Works Committee meeting, so that's what is making it difficult for our attendance.

Mr. Witt, we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF JAMES LEE WITT, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY; ACCOMPANIED BY MICHAEL ARMSTRONG, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR MITIGATION AND LACY SUITER, EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Mr. WITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Hutchinson thank you for being here. It's good to see a fellow Arkansan and my Senator. Thank you for your support and thank the members of this committee for their support. I just want to thank you for the opportunity and express my appreciation for the support Congress has continued to provide FEMA over these last 5½ years.

I'll make my remarks brief so we'll have time for questions and answers. I know how busy you are, and I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman, my statement be placed in the record.

Senator INHOFE. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. WITT. I'm very proud of our efforts at FEMA and the assistance we have delivered and the message that we send to the Nation that we really do care about what happens to the people across the country and that help will be there if it's needed. The future

of emergency management and FEMA's role in the future is what I want to talk about today.

I have been blessed to serve a President who cares deeply about the affects of disasters on our people and our communities, and a Congress that recognizes and supports our efforts. And I'm equally pleased to serve an agency that really does make a big difference in peoples lives.

Our staff has worked very hard. We've also been very fortunate because we get to work with some of the very best partners at State and local Governments across the country and some of the best people at the local level in volunteer organizations, public safety forces, emergency managers, floodplain managers, fire services, and the private relief organizations that help us so much during disasters, and the local people in the communities that are forced to respond under some of the very most pressing circumstances.

But, Mr. Chairman, during my time at FEMA I've had a really wonderful opportunity to meet some outstanding people across our country. I have met brave people after a disaster who have determined to rebuild their homes and communities, and we should really celebrate the spirit in which these people work so hard to rebuild and their inspiration to us all to help them more and to work harder for them.

Today, I hope you will join me in supporting these people before a disaster occurs. Through Project Impact, our predisaster mitigation program, we're working to make meaningful changes in communities to reduce the impacts of disasters. Hope doesn't have to follow tragedy. Hope can be there before a disaster to make our schools, our businesses, our homes, and our communities safer and stronger.

This is an historic hearing since your legislation provides increased legislative authority for predisaster mitigation. We appreciate the fact that the Senate draft bill is authorizing this program. We would appreciate a 5-year authorization for this program, with funding increasing rather than decreasing. That would send a very important message to those partners out there that we're working with to make a difference in those communities and to strengthen them. This is a new approach and this program needs to be funded at the level that allows FEMA to leverage that public/private sector out there that's going to be putting seed money into all these communities across the country that we're working with.

Two other items. I strongly believe that this program should not sunset. I believe we should report to you on the program after the 5-year period and then have the committee decide what course of action we should take in the future at the end of that period.

Project Impact really needs to be its own separate account in FEMA's budget, with administrative funds to support the efforts at all levels. Project Impact is special. It is not just another Federal grant program, it is a unique partnership that brings communities together in a lot of different ways, from spring break programs where students have gone out in the communities to help their communities, like adopting storm drains to keep them clean, minimize future floodings. Project Impact is a catalyst for some of the best ideas around in these communities. I would be pleased to give

you a number of examples of what we're doing in Project Impact as we continue our discussions today.

As we move forward on Project Impact, we still need to continue our post-disaster mitigation. In the aftermath of the 1993 floods, FEMA worked with the Administration and Congress to initiate a property buy-out program that removed over 20,000 pieces of property from the floodplain and returned them to open land-use management. In fact, Senator Chafee was one of the leaders in this effort and was instrumental in helping to achieve its passage.

Two years later, in 1995, these same areas that flooded were flooded again, but no one lived there, we did not have to spend a single dime on disaster costs, and those people did not have to go through the frustration of losing everything that they had worked all their life for. This meant that emergency funds did not have to be spent protecting those same structures. The disaster funds at the Federal, State, and local level were not spent in repairing homes and rebuilding that infrastructure in that area.

We appreciate the work that has been done in the Senate subcommittee's draft bill. I want to thank your staff for all the hard work that they put in on this which recognizes the contribution mitigation makes to reducing future impacts. We strongly endorse the increase in the 404 program. Under the Senate draft bill, this amount is raised up to 20 percent from 15 percent. We believe this will have a significant and immediate impact on reducing the disaster risk across the Nation. This will provide greater resources to address the repetitive flood losses that we have across our country and to take other mitigation measures such as seismic retrofitting, wind resistance, and preventive measures. I would be happy to provide you with examples in how this works as well as we go through today.

Let me close by saying we have streamlined our individual assistance program, we have streamlined our entire process and systems to make it more customer friendly and to serve our customers better. But by doing this, just by doing the tele-restoration centers where people call and apply by a 1-800 number saves us about \$16 million a year by doing that. The computer technology we're using with our inspectors now that verifies application needs and the central processing that we have put in place is saving \$22.5 million a year.

Also, I think it's noteworthy to talk about the improvements in how we have accelerated this. The housing inspectors that go out and look at the damages after a person calls and makes an application, puts it in the palm pad computer, transmits it to central processing. It used to take weeks and weeks to get that money out to help the individual. Now we get it out to them in seven to 10 days. But the good side of it is how well we can track it. We have a better ability now to track this with a financial management system and have a good financial management track record.

Public assistance, Lacy Suiter, the Association Director, to my right, and his office is working with the States in streamlining the public assistance program. This new public assistance program and the reengineering of it puts the decisionmaking down in the local Government's hands and the State Government's. The pilot programs that we have put in place in Kentucky and in Florida are

working extremely well. I'm sure you'll hear more about that. So we would ask you to help and encourage you to get this in place in the legislation.

We can do better. But I believe we have got to change the way we deal with the disasters or we're going to be continually paying over and over and over again in the same areas that have been hit by disasters time and time again. We have to put an end to the damage-repair-damage-repair cycle. Predisaster mitigation and mitigation is the way to do this.

I want to thank you for your time. I deeply appreciate the support that you have given me and FEMA and the staff since I came into this job, and the confidence that you have shown in us and the job that we do. It does matter and it does make a difference to people. We'll be happy to answer any of your questions.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Witt.

For the benefit of our fellow Senators up here, I would like to go right up to 9:30, and when we get over there I understand there will be two votes. That way we can knock them both out with one short recess. We've been joined by the ranking member of this committee, Senator Graham from Florida, and the chairman of the full committee, Senator Chafee. I would like to ask if they have any opening statements or comments to make?

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BOB GRAHAM,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Senator GRAHAM. Senator, I appreciate your holding this hearing. The whole issue of the avoidance or mitigation of disasters has been one that people have felt intuitively was important but which we at a policy level have not given adequate attention to. I have a statement which I would like to file for the record.

Senator INHOFE. Without objection.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you and particularly James Lee Witt for the testimony today. If I could, Mr. Chairman, I have in my experience in Florida and now in the U.S. Senate had an opportunity to work with a number of the leadership and professionals in the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and I will say that James Lee Witt has brought a new standard of ability and dedication to that position and has had an enormous impact both within the Federal agency and I see it at the State level. State officials see James Lee Witt and say that's the role model that I want leading my emergency operation in my State or in my community.

And so I could not be more appreciative or complimentary of James Lee Witt for what he has contributed to our Nation and, particularly, our ability to respond in the times of ultimate crisis.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Senator Graham. That's exactly what I said in a less eloquent way.

[Laughter.]

[The prepared statement of Senator Graham follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. BOB GRAHAM, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Chairman Inhofe and members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to join with you today to hear testimony on a very important matter, disaster mitigation and the Senate's role in encouraging mitigation. Since the outset of this year, I have been working closely with Senator Inhofe to develop bipartisan legislation to more comprehensively address the threats we face from disasters of all types. The bill is com-

posed of two (2) titles: (1) Title I seeks to reduce the impact of disasters by authorizing a "predisaster mitigation" program; (2) Title II seeks to streamline the current disaster assistance programs to save administrative costs and to simplify the program for grant recipients. Our witnesses have reviewed the initial draft of this legislation, and come before us today to offer their comments and suggestions to improve upon our efforts to better control both the impact and the costs of disasters.

We will also hear details about the strategies that are being pursued at the Federal, state and local levels to protect our nation against the effects of all types of disasters. Again, I believe this to be a critically important issue, both to my constituents in Florida and to high-risk areas throughout the nation, and I am looking forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

Our first witness today will be the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), James Lee Witt. I am particularly familiar with the actions of Director Witt and FEMA this year, because Florida has experienced an unprecedented number of natural disasters throughout the State. In February of this year, 42 lives were lost in Central Florida as a result of the widespread destruction caused by severe storms and tornadoes. These tornadoes were followed by statewide floods, when many rivers reached record flood levels, and remained at flood level for several weeks. Over the past 2 months, Florida has been ravaged by statewide forest fires that were only recently contained to a manageable level.

In each of these situations, FEMA mobilized quickly, in cooperation with the state and affected local governments, to provide residents and governments with the assistance they need to respond to and recover from the effects of these disasters. Today, when the President issues a major disaster declaration, the people of Florida feel a sense of relief and comfort, knowing that FEMA, and Director James Lee Witt, will soon arrive to carry them through toward recovery.

Mr. Chairman, this feeling of relief represents a 180 degree turnaround from the feelings that FEMA used to engender in the State of Florida. As we all well remember, FEMA's actions following Hurricane Andrew in 1992, were less than expected. However, following the Andrew experience, and at the request of many Senators in this chamber, FEMA developed more effective and efficient methods of both protecting the population before disasters, and responding to disasters after they occur.

Under the leadership of Director James Lee Witt—whom I believe was one of President Clinton's best appointments—FEMA has changed their way of doing business. In the past 5 years, FEMA has become more responsive to disaster victims and state and local governments, and has "reinvented" itself by choosing to focus its energy on mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from the effects of natural hazards.

Today we will hear more about this reinvention—at all levels of government—in terms of preventing the effects of disasters before they occur. The draft bill that we will discuss today seeks to refocus the energies of Federal, state and local governments on mitigation, and will shift our efforts to preventative—rather than responsive—actions in planning for disasters. Such a change in ideology is critical to reducing the short- and long-term costs of natural disasters. We must seek to encourage both the public and the private sector—as well as individual citizens—to take responsibility for the threats they face by adopting the concept of disaster mitigation into their everyday lives. Just like energy conservation, recycling, and the widespread use of seat belts, disaster mitigation should become a concept that all citizens incorporate into their day-to-day lives.

FEMA has taken an important first step in this process by establishing "Project Impact," their new mitigation initiative, in local communities throughout the nation. I am proud to say that Deerfield Beach, Florida, was the first community to be chosen as a participant in Project Impact. I am certain that the leadership of Joe Myers, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management—who will also be testifying today—was an important factor in FEMA's choice of Deerfield Beach. As we conduct this hearing, I will be interested to hear: (1) how this initiative has been implemented to date; (2) what actions are being taken at the state and local levels to encourage mitigation; (3) what partnership role is being taken by the private sector; and finally, (4) what legislative initiatives the Senate should pursue to ensure that Project Impact is fully successful.

Once again Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing, and I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses, and working with you to move this legislation forward.

Senator INHOFE. Senator Chafee?

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN H. CHAFEE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Again, I want to join in congratulating you for holding these hearings. This is a very important area. I think Mr. Witt is right on track when he talks about mitigation. It's a tough agency to run. We've all had experience with seeing the problems that they confront. No matter what they do, people criticize. It's a tough job, and, Mr. Witt, I think you've done excellent work and congratulate you, and I would urge you to pursue this mitigation effort that you're involved with.

Mr. WITT. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Senator Chafee.

Let me start off, Mr. Director, by reading something that was in a magazine called "Quality Engineering" on this Institute for Business and Home Safety. When you read the description of this, which I'll read part of a paragraph, "The IBHS is an insurance industry initiative to reduce deaths, injuries, property damage, economic loss, and human suffering caused by wind storms," et cetera, "in our showcase communities," which I think are analogous to some of your Impact communities, "We will establish partnerships with Government," and so forth, it sounds almost like the job description that you describe in your opening remarks.

I look upon this as something that someday might be able to take over a program like this, and perhaps this would be jump-starting it. I would like to know what your perspective is in terms of the relationship between the program that we're embarking upon now and this program as portrayed in this magazine?

Mr. WITT. Mr. Chairman, that program, Harvey Ryland is the director of that Institute and that program, Harvey is working very closely with us in some of the Project Impact communities and designating them a showcase community. So we're working in sync with that organization.

The problem with the organization is that they are very limited in funding directly to a community because they are a research organization that does research for the insurance industry.

Senator INHOFE. How many communities do they have under this, approximately, do you know?

Mr. WITT. I believe they are working in five communities at the present time. Is that right, Mike?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Senator, Michael Armstrong, Associate Director for Mitigation. IBHS is spotlighting roughly seven and up to maybe a dozen showcase communities across the country. They have stated that their goal is to have demonstration projects in some of these communities. But they have confessed publicly that they are limited, as the Director said, financially. They are more there to demonstrate retrofit on one particular structure, but they certainly don't have the resources to give local communities.

Senator INHOFE. All right. Thank you.

We have 4 minutes remaining in this vote. We're going to go vote on this and then vote one more time, there are two votes, and then we'll come right back. So we'll take about a 10-minute recess at this time. I hope that you folks can return.

[Recess.]

Senator INHOFE. We'll reconvene now.

We have others coming back. It took a little longer than I thought, and I apologize for that.

Mr. Witt, for the seven pilot communities in Project Impact, are you able this early to show any definitive results? Give us a progress report on what you know now that you didn't know when all of this started.

Mr. WITT. Mr. Chairman, it has gone extremely well. What I'm so impressed about is the fact that the small amount of money that we used in the pilot communities that started the community on the road to do the prevention program, the money from the business community and corporate leaders and the banks has just been incredible. It's like \$1 million of seed money and the community themselves, with the business community and the organizations, raised \$6 million more to go with it to, for example, in Seattle, Washington, retrofit for an earthquake. The goal in the near term is to retrofit 2,000 homes of moderate to low income and their schools against earthquake risk.

What has been interesting as well is, for example, Merchant's Marine Bank in Pascagoula, Mississippi, is now actively advertising FHA title 1 loans to individuals and businesses to do the prevention that they need to do against hurricanes and floods. And other banks, such as Citizens National Bank of West Virginia and Washington Mutual are developing favorable loan packages for mitigation loan customers. Pacific Bell has joined as a partner. So many other corporations have joined. It's going extremely well.

Senator INHOFE. Good. Good. I know it is difficult to answer a question like this because different States are equipped differently, but looking down the road to devolving some of this to the State and local level, how would you analyze the States' ability now to absorb these responsibilities?

Mr. WITT. I think some States, Mr. Chairman, have an incredible ability to do a lot in their State because they have the staff to do it and they have the State Governors and the legislators supporting them.

Senator INHOFE. And, too, some States are already doing this. They may be under a different—

Mr. WITT. Yes, sir. They are. Mike Armstrong in Mitigation has been working diligently with the NEMA Subcommittee on Mitigation and putting in place a State management program. We're piloting that program in Florida and where else, Mike?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. In Florida, North Dakota, and Iowa.

Mr. WITT. And Joe Myers is here today, and that's working extremely well. They signed an MOU with FEMA that they want to participate as a management program for mitigation, and we hope that this program will be part of that management program or that MOU after we get it in place.

Senator INHOFE. Mr. Witt, I talked to some of the other members who are not going to be back for a little while. They, and it's the custom of this committee to do this and other committees, would like to submit some questions to you in writing, and I'm sure you would be receptive to responding to those questions to this committee. In doing so, I would like to have it done fairly quickly because we're talking about maybe doing a markup next week. They do have questions they would like have answered, and if you could

give that a priority when those questions come in, we would appreciate it.

Mr. WITT. We will, sir.

Senator INHOFE. Let me again reemphasize the high regard I personally have for you and what you have done for my State of Oklahoma and the job that you're doing as Director. Thank you very much for coming this morning.

Mr. WITT. Mr. Chairman, may I add one thing?

Senator INHOFE. Yes, of course.

Mr. WITT. My vision of this program is to bring in the insurance companies, particularly in communities where people are doing the prevention, and taking the necessary measures to eliminate that risk in their home and their business and their community. We would like to see the insurance industry give them a lower premium and a lower deductible in support of that effort.

Also, I met with the Wall Street contingency planners' professional association, and we're working to give those communities that participate and do the prevention, when they needed a bond issue, a better bond rating. These are the types of things that we're bringing in to try to help those communities and strengthen them. I think it's going to work.

Senator INHOFE. I think it's a win-win situation. It results in lower premiums for individuals, saving lives, of course, that's what it is really all about, and the more you can come up with what you mentioned in your opening remarks about a second disaster and not one life was lost, those are compelling arguments that make this a kind of program we can all support on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol. Thank you very much.

Mr. WITT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INHOFE. I would ask our second panel to come to the table. Our second panel consists of the Honorable Hal Daub, Mayor of Omaha; Joe Myers, Director of Florida Division of Emergency Management; Mr. Albert Ashwood, from my State of Oklahoma; and Dan Summers, Director of the Department of Emergency Management in Hanover County, North Carolina.

As I mentioned before, Hal Daub is an old friend of mine. We quite often when I see my fellow senators and they complain about the long hours they're working and the difficulty of their job, I say you try being the mayor of a major city. I've had a hard job as a three-term Mayor of Tulsa, Oklahoma, about the same size as your city, Hal, and I know how difficult it is. If they don't like the trash system, it ends up in your front yard. There's no hiding place.

Mayor Daub. That's right, Mr. Chairman. They know where you live.

Senator INHOFE. That's right.

I do appreciate all of you being here. We want to hear from you from a State perspective. We will go ahead in the order of the hearing notice, with Daub, Myers, Ashwood, and Summers. Again, if you would try to keep your remarks close to 5 minutes, that would be fine. Your whole statement will be entered as a part of the record.

We'll start with Mayor Daub.

**STATEMENT OF HON. HAL DAUB, MAYOR OF OMAHA,
NEBRASKA, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES**

Mayor Daub. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I think I can hit somewhere between five and seven, I'm not sure about five. But I really do appreciate the chance to be here and to let you know how much the National League of Cities appreciates your leadership and that of your ranking member, Senator Graham, and the members of this subcommittee.

I am in my second term, as you alluded, as Mayor of the great city of Omaha, Nebraska. I was a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1981 to 1989 and had the privilege of serving with you. So it's a double pleasure to be here today. Currently I'm a member of the board of directors of the National League of Cities, and last year I served as Chair of our National League of Cities Public Safety and Crime Prevention Steering Committee which is responsible for developing NLC policy on all issues related to public safety. This committee considers and recommends related policies, particularly those that affect natural and manmade disasters. I am testifying for the League today as a member of the organization's board.

During my tenure on the Public Safety Committee, I was privileged to serve as Chair of the Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief Subcommittee. Through this service, as well as my time in Congress, I've had the opportunity to study much legislation dealing with Federal disaster relief for municipalities. And now as Mayor of the Nation's 45th largest city, I've had the opportunity to form a unique perspective into the combining roles of our local and Federal Government entities and what kind of a role they should play in planning emergency response and in funding disaster relief.

In fact, just last October the city of Omaha experienced its own devastating snowstorm in which an estimated \$10.5 million of Federal aid will be given to our city to help repair nearly \$15 million of storm related damages, mostly to public parks, streets, and infrastructure including right-of-ways. So in the aftermath of that storm, the private sector volunteerism and support which came forward became an even more invaluable catalyst for recovery. Those public-private partnerships between citizens, city government, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency exemplified to me all that we're here today to talk about.

The National League of Cities was founded in 1926 by State municipal leagues, as you well remember, and has become the established voice of our Nation's cities at the Federal level. We represent 49 State Leagues, 135,000 local elected officials, 1,400 direct and 16,000 indirect member cities.

So, I want to say, first, thank you very much for your leadership, and thank your staff for your outreach to cities and other stakeholders with roles in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

My statement, Mr. Chairman, is submitted at this time to you for the record, if you will accept it.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mayor Daub.

Mayor Daub. And I would like to go forward with just a couple of other comments.

Senator INHOFE. Let me ask you a question. The only question I was going to ask is you're here as the Mayor and also speaking in behalf of the National League of Cities, I want to make sure that is in the record.

Mayor Daub. Yes, that is correct.

I'm going to skip through my formal statement and just highlight a couple of things that I think will be of interest to the committee.

Almost two-thirds of Federal disaster costs are from damage to public facilities and infrastructure. We know all disasters are local. Thus, it is essential that responsible local officials, both elected and professional emergency personnel, are engaged on a permanent basis in activities to increase our overall capability to identify and assess disaster risks and to advance established mitigation strategies and priorities. This legislation will greatly assist us, it will propel us on that path.

It is not certain that mitigation is all of the answer, but, as someone said, intuitively, one must think that it is a very appropriate approach. And I am pleased that FEMA is now very much on board in this arena and wants to see this occur. I was very much encouraged by Director Witt's testimony and their preparation for the potential of this legislation which has been marked up in the House and now being marked up in the Senate.

Throughout this act there is an emphasis placed on the importance of Federal support to and engagement of State and local Governments to accomplish implementation of effective mitigation measures. We are pleased that States are called upon to engage local governments in development of their comprehensive mitigation plans and programs as well as in setting statewide priorities. This involvement will help local officials begin to recognize and analyze existing hazards and to learn how they can be reduced or eliminated through already proven mitigation approaches.

We also expect FEMA to provide States and localities in a timely fashion information on the successes of Project Impact as they develop. This should include examples of how cities succeed in bringing the business and not-for-profit sectors in as partners to create disaster resistant communities. Setting criterion and recognizing meaningful and definable outcomes are crucial if we are to determine what specific mitigation activities work and how well they work in saving lives, reducing recovery costs, and preventing major disruption in local and regional economies. The criteria you set in this act will also facilitate objective selection by States and localities recommended to the President for predisaster mitigation assistance.

We applaud in the proposal the creation of the Interagency Task Force to coordinate all predisaster mitigation administered by the Federal Government. In section 202, we want to make a point about the Small Business Administration language. The requirement would be that a not-for-profit must apply to the SBA for a disaster loan and be rejected or receive an insufficient amount to make repairs before it could receive assistance under this act. That could be a serious problem. For example, if the Red Cross was the primary service provider for persons and families displaced by a disaster and Red Cross shelters were damaged and therefore unsafe, wouldn't it be important that needed repairs be funded imme-

diately? Wouldn't waiting for SBA approval and rejection of a loan request create hardship after such a major disaster. We might want to take a look at the language to accommodate that sort of thing.

We would also like to encourage the subcommittee to include in your report on this act language directing FEMA to provide opportunities for public comment prior to the adoption of any new or modified policies that would have potential funding impacts on State and local Governments, and that the agency does not apply such policies retroactively.

Last, just a quick highlighting, it will take me less than a minute, to support the following:

We fully support the recommendations in the bill for the evaluation after 18 months of the implementation of predisaster mitigation. We support the establishment of cost estimation procedures. We support having the OCC conduct studies to examine the effectiveness of hazard mitigation programs. We support estimates by them to reduce Federal disaster assistance resulting from the implementation of the act. We appreciate that you will be looking at determining the current and future availability of disaster insurance for public infrastructure. We support the examination analytically of major disasters since 1974 so that we can look at more criterion in the future as we look at reauthorization in the year 2002 or some furtherance of the act.

In addition, and in conclusion, with regard to studies and reports recommended by this legislation, the organization that I'm testifying on behalf of would like to encourage the subcommittee to commission a study to provide us all with the best possible information on disaster costs incurred by local, State, and Federal Governments. This information is essential if we're to determine whether or not predisaster mitigation really reduces disaster costs and is not taken out of the hide of local governments by supplementals. Our goal is to see this bill passed because we believe it will reduce the necessity for supplemental appropriations in the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mayor.

I would like to recognize our ranking member, Senator Graham, to introduce the next witness from Florida.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is a great pleasure to introduce a man with whom I've actually been spending more time than I would care to in the last few weeks as a result of the unprecedented series of wildfires that we have experienced in Florida. But I want to say that typical of his work in other crises in Florida, from floods, to tornadoes, to hurricanes, that Joe Myers has again distinguished himself by the manner in which he has led our State in a coordinated effort to respond to this summer's crisis of fire.

Mr. Myers is one of the most respected State leaders of an emergency management agency. He has managed the Florida Division of Emergency Management since March 1993. He has spent the past 22 years in various forms of emergency management. I have a longer statement, Mr. Chairman, that I would like to submit for the record. But for the purposes of this hearing, I think it is particularly significant that he has been a major proponent of disaster

mitigation and has worked to implement one of the Nation's first disaster resistant communities in Deerfield Beach, Florida. He has been working to develop local mitigation strategies throughout Florida, a grassroots approach to disaster mitigation.

So I am pleased that Mr. Myers joins his colleagues who are committed to this cause and I know will bring to us a valuable set of personal experiences and observations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Senator Graham. We will put your entire introduction into the record.

[The prepared statement of Senator Graham follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR GRAHAM INTRODUCING MR. JOE MYERS

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce Mr. Joe Myers to the subcommittee. Mr. Myers has managed Florida's Division of Emergency Management since March 1993, and has worked in the field of emergency management for the past 22 years. His philosophy of "Coordination, Cooperation, and Unity" between local, State and Federal Governments and the private sector has become his trademark for excellence.

Because of Florida's vulnerability to hurricanes, Mr. Myers has developed a dynamic and proactive emergency management program. He has enhanced Florida's State and local preparedness, response, and recovery programs; and is continuing to develop a proactive mitigation initiative at all levels of government.

Mr. Myers has actively worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop, revise and implement various policy initiatives. He continues to emphasize the critical importance of mitigation and has worked to implement one of the nation's first "disaster resistant communities," in Deerfield Beach, Florida. This has been enhanced by his work to develop "Local Mitigation Strategies," a grounds-up approach to local mitigation efforts.

In addition to being Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, Mr. Myers serves as the Chairman of FEMA's National Mitigation Committee, and on the Board of Directors for the National Multihazard Mitigation Council, and on the Advisory Panel for Risk & Vulnerability Assessment at the Heinz Center. In summary, he is uniquely qualified to discuss the application and implementation of disaster mitigation, and I look forward to his testimony.

Senator INHOFE. Mr. Myers?

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH MYERS, DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Mr. MYERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning. First, let me start by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Graham, and other members of the committee for the opportunity for NEMA to speak today on these important issues. NEMA represents all the State and territory emergency management directors within the Nation and work directly with our Governors.

This bill and what we're going to be discussing today I think will be one of what we call the defining moments in the history of emergency management. I've been in the business for over 20 years. I started in the 1970's and there's been about three or four major moments I think where the State, the local governments, the Federal Government, and the private sector have had to come together and tackle problems that became defining moments. Start back with the nuclear power problems of Three Mile Island in the 1970's, where the industry and the Government had to come together to resolve it, have better preparedness and programs. We did the same thing in the 1980's after the tragedy in Bhopal, India, where the chemical companies had to come together with the Gov-

ernment and form a better partnership to make things better. After Hurricane Andrew, the private sector and the Government got together and we have a better response program today.

I think we're going into one of those defining moments, and that is the soaring cost of disasters and mitigation as we go into this next century. So I think that will go down as our big challenge in the 21st century.

This proposed bill, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 1998 hits at the heart of some of the most serious problems—cost containment, sustainable predisaster mitigation, and process streamlining. FEMA, through the great leadership of James Lee Witt, has worked in tandem with NEMA, and he used to be a member of NEMA, he was a State director, on these important issues, many of which are reflected in this bill.

We believe and wholeheartedly support the notion that the only way to effectively reduce the spiraling cost of disasters is through preparedness and mitigation. We believe the establishment of a continuing appropriation for a predisaster mitigation program will have an immediate and long-term cost reduction benefit to this Nation. We would encourage the committee to consider keeping the level of funding at \$50 million a year instead of decreasing it on a sliding scale to where at the year 2002 it would be \$20 million.

Equally important are the provisions in the bill to streamline the hazard mitigation grant program and the public and individual assistance program. This will have an immediate benefit to both Federal and State recovery and mitigation efforts. We want to applaud the committee for recommending the increase of the hazard mitigation program from 15 to 20 percent for all Federal assistance, deleting the old sliding scale for associated costs with the idea of the management costs, using estimates of cost in the public assistance program, and revisions to the individual assistance program we think is going to help the victim get aid there quicker. And last, institutionalizing the concept of the hazard mitigation program management State. Florida was the first State in the Nation to sign an MOU with FEMA to become a management State. I am here to report to you today that it works very well. It has radically expedited the entire HMG process in our State. As a matter of fact, our first grant we did through the process I think we cleared it in about 4 hours.

We are especially happy to see section 206 added to the bill streamlining the public assistance program. It's long overdue. We look forward to implementing this new process throughout the country. As a matter of fact, yesterday we got the go ahead from FEMA to start on some of that process from our most recent fires.

Last, I would like to encourage the committee to take a look at the fire suppression grant process, having gone through what U.S. Forestry Service is calling the most complex firefighting event in the history of this Nation. We do see a need to review this process.

We believe that FEMA should be in charge of all disasters including fires. That would eliminate any type of confusion as we look beyond the traditional wind and water issues in our emergency preparedness and response activities. As more people move into the urban-wildland interface, we will see more fires encroaching upon more homes just as they did in Florida. So really, it's get-

ting beyond just fires, as they now get into the urban interface, they are becoming more like the traditional natural disasters. We see a stronger role by FEMA. We need to study this in much more detail and recommend appropriate fire prevention activities for our citizens.

Thank you for giving me the time today. It would be a pleasure for us to discuss with you any of the issues and I'm ready to answer any of your questions.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Myers.

Our next witness will be Mr. Ashwood. Albert Ashwood is from Oklahoma and it happens that he is married to the daughter of at least one of my three closest friends in Oklahoma, Don Farrow. He and I were both in the State Senate, in fact were both Minority Leaders, he followed me in that position. I don't think there's anyone who understands the personal pain of disaster more than Mr. Ashwood. His wife's sister was killed in the blast of the Murrah Federal Office Building. She was an attorney for HUD. So he has a very personal concern for this program.

I recognize at this time Mr. Ashwood.

**STATEMENT OF ALBERT ASHWOOD, DIRECTOR, OKLAHOMA
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, OKLAHOMA
CITY, OKLAHOMA**

Mr. ASHWOOD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Graham. I would like to thank you for the opportunity for the State of Oklahoma to present testimony before your subcommittee.

We commend you for your ongoing efforts to strengthen and enhance the Nation's emergency management system and we look forward to providing any assistance to you for this endeavor. From our position, your subcommittee recognizes that the only way we will truly reduce disaster costs and the significant impacts of disasters on our communities is through mitigation, more specifically, predisaster mitigation.

The focus of today's hearing is predisaster mitigation and the streamlining and cost reduction of the emergency management process. Since 1990, Oklahoma has experienced 17 federally declared disasters which include 7 fire suppression declarations. Federal, State, and local dollars that were used within the State for each of the three recovery programs—individual assistance, infrastructure and mitigation—during this period totals over \$80 million.

However, an important point to consider here is that the figure represents only the assistance identified as a result of the requirements to track disaster expenditures. Insured losses, uninsured losses or under insured losses, unreported labor and construction costs, and other miscellaneous costs would add even more dollars to that total. In addition, in 1994, the State of Oklahoma enacted the State Public Assistance program. This legislation provides public assistance to political subdivisions up to \$100,000 per calendar year, per jurisdiction, for nonfederally declared disasters that are declared by the Governor. For the State program we've expended nearly \$3 million of State funds. Our program does not require a local match for these funds; however, it should be noted that in

most of these disasters they cost well in excess of \$100,000 that is allowed per community.

We strongly concur with the intent of the bill as written. Each of us at the Federal, State, local, and private level should do everything within our means to reduce the cost of disasters before they occur. Title I, predisaster hazard mitigation, will assist in this endeavor. We encourage all of our communities to identify and assess their risks, implement measures to reduce disaster losses, and ensure that critical facilities, public infrastructure, and lifelines will continue to function after a disaster. At the same time we are encouraging communities to do this, we are also advocating that the continuance of Federal assistance might be in jeopardy unless respective communities start helping themselves first before the disaster.

Please understand that we fully concur with the predisaster hazard mitigation program. But we are trying to convince the communities of their responsibilities relative to developing a unified effort through local partnerships, identifying nonFederal resources, and initiating a strong commitment to long-term mitigation projects that can be funded locally. In addition, these local initiatives should be identified in detail in their all hazards mitigation plan.

A review of Title I discloses that may need clarification on the following items:

First, the definition of small impoverished communities. Coordination with our State Department of Commerce indicates that this definition may relate somewhat to the Department of Commerce's definition of a "low to moderate income community." However, the term "impoverished" may need to be specifically defined so that it is consistent with the definition used by HUD.

Second, a 90 percent share versus a 75 percent share of Federal funds for impoverished communities. This might be a national concern if approached from a strictly numbers standpoint. In Oklahoma, we have approximately 600 cities and towns but only about 145 have a population of over 2,000. Once again, we may need a better definition of "impoverished" so that we do not have situations of disproportionate distribution of funds within the State.

There is a wealth of opportunities to use predisaster hazard mitigation funds in Oklahoma. As just one example, we have identified 85 structures that have repetitive losses from flood damages and several hundred more with just one loss. These structures need to be acquired and removed from the flood plain as soon as possible. We could use funds now to accomplish some of these acquisitions and many communities are able to provide the necessary matching funds.

Regarding Title II, streamlining and cost reduction. We concur with the provisions of the draft bill as relates to management costs and assistance to repair, restore or reconstruct, or replace damaged facilities. The latter is a step forward to ensure that mitigation opportunities are discussed at each step of the public assistance process, and it provides the opportunity to fund hazard mitigation measures the State or local Government determines to be necessary.

Providing care to individuals is a paramount concern in any emergency situation. For example, we are currently experiencing

drought conditions in Oklahoma, as are other States a well. We have convened the appropriate State agency directors, their Federal counterparts, volunteer agencies, and private sector businesses to activate the Oklahoma State Drought Management Plan. This plan focuses on fire suppression, water shortages, heat related problems, and agricultural losses. This is a proactive step to protect our Oklahoma citizens. The emergency management process as relates to individual assistance is a crucial link in providing food, shelter, and life sustaining services to each Oklahoman.

We in Oklahoma learned a very valuable lesson April 19, 1995, and the Oklahoma disaster service community continues to provide essential services to many of those affected by the Murrah Building bombing. From this lesson we know that early coordination is the key to sustaining a reasonable quality of life for those affected by disasters. We must remember that a disaster does not end when the immediate response is completed. For those affected families the disaster has only begun.

We concur with the State administration of the hazard mitigation assistance program. The wording of the draft bill enables each State to conduct an assessment of its abilities and capabilities to participate as a managing State along with the flexibility to participate in the program when the time is right. As defined, long-term, each State should strive to become a managing State. However, local capabilities impact on the final decision. We have already participated in some of this coordination. It would appear to be a seamless process to become a management State.

We concur in concept with the streamlining of damaged facilities program. Since the program is still under development, we hesitate to concur fully until we have had a chance to review the new program in its entirety. We have been asked from the start of this initiative to review and provide comments relative to the development of the program.

It appears that the PA program concurrently under development by FEMA will reduce the administration requirements of the current program as well as be more responsive to all eligible applicants. Further, as a member of NEMA, we are also looking at this program and evaluating it at that level. Streamlining the process is long overdue, and we look forward to the new program.

In summary, we in Oklahoma share your concern about the rising costs of disasters. We encourage you to explore all opportunities to initiate cost-reducing measures such as predisaster hazard mitigation. Devolving more authority for the hazard mitigation grant program and the public assistance program will definitely reduce administrative costs, eliminate duplication, and streamline the entire process. The ultimate benefactors will be disaster victims themselves. Initiatives that you have identified already about a study regarding cost reduction, a study regarding disaster insurance for public infrastructure, and a study regarding declarations will no doubt identify additional areas for consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Ashwood. We're very proud in Oklahoma of the work that you're doing.

We've been joined by Senator Sessions from Alabama. I would ask Senator Sessions if he has any comment he'd like to make at this time.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF SESSIONS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA**

Mr. SESSIONS. Just briefly, Mr. Chairman. I have had occasion in my short tenure in this office to travel twice to Alabama unfortunately on disaster situations and travelled with Mr. James Lee Witt, the Director of FEMA. I'm sorry I missed his testimony. But I was very impressed with him, his responsiveness, his understanding of the problems, and his commitment to deal with this question of mitigation. He believes in it strongly. I think we need to work at it. We, like Senator Graham from Florida, have every so often, too often it seems, disaster situations that we want to be sure we're dealing with it the right way. But I think we can make great progress with disaster mitigation. I think we need to listen to the States and the people who are carrying it out on a daily basis. If we do that, we can make some good improvements. I think it is a good and important hearing, and thank you for calling it.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

Mr. Summers?

**STATEMENT OF DAN SUMMERS, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, NEW HANOVER COUNTY, WIL-
MINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA**

Mr. SUMMERS. Good morning. Before I begin, I would like to mention to Senator Graham that I had the opportunity to lead 37 North Carolina firefighters to Florida as part of that activity. We were happy to serve in that capacity and hope we in some way returned the favor that we received from the State of Florida during Hurricanes Bertha and Fran. I have to tell you, the hospitality was real good, too.

Senator GRAHAM. If I could, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank Mr. Summers, and through him, those who came from North Carolina and the 40 other States who assisted in these fires. Without their assistance, I think Mr. Myers would verify, we would not have been able to have contained this terrible situation without much higher loss of life and property. So thank you very much.

Mr. SUMMERS. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is indeed an honor to be with you today. I compliment you on your desire to learn more from the local Government perspective regarding possible amendments to the Stafford Act.

I bring to this discussion 15 years service as one community's Emergency Manager having participated in four Presidential Disaster Declarations. In North Carolina, nearly all one hundred counties have experienced disasters in the past decade. The issue of disaster response is no longer the other community's problem. I can attest that most all local Governments now have a greater appreciation for a sound emergency management response program. However, it is my belief that while disaster response plans are improving, only a small number of communities are sensitive to the rising disaster cost and the potential for cost reduction under the concept of mitigation.

This committee, along with local Governments, and Federal agencies are equally concerned about the cost of disaster recovery. However, before you hasten to suggest restrictions, understand that every disaster response is indeed community specific. Needs vary, and individual pain and suffering is far greater than the typical 15 second sound bite seen on the evening news.

I have witnessed Federal participation in disasters in the 1980's and I have been a part of the Federal response effort during events of the 1990's. Allow me to compliment FEMA and many of its Federal partners on dramatic improvements in customer service. While dramatic improvements have occurred and communities are better served, there still exists opportunities to reach new levels in disaster response and mitigation. The efforts of FEMA's Project Impact is the new cornerstone of local recovery in mitigation initiatives.

My community, New Hanover County, North Carolina, is one of seven pilot communities involved in this worthwhile program. With FEMA's program support, we have a local community-driven task force. Our task force, titled the Partnership for Disaster Mitigation and Recovery, has generated strong community interest. Let me illustrate some of these successes.

In our partnership with Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse, we've conducted hurricane preparedness expos. These events have literally allowed thousands of visitors and customers to learn more on topics ranging from simple preparedness reminders to the latest techniques in strengthening residential homes and roof systems.

Barnes and Noble Booksellers have contributed a full month of community service programming to hurricane awareness and single family home mitigation techniques. Most notably has been the highly acclaimed sessions for children who have learned preparedness and drawn pictures of elevating their homes, illustrating their understanding of disaster mitigation techniques.

Just one of our planned construction projects is a combined FEMA and local effort. Combining post-disaster funding sources, we are designing new school roof systems to not only reduce the cost of damages during the next hurricane, but improving the building safety as an evacuation shelter as well. A key part of this activity will include training local engineers, building code officials, and architects on the latest wind resistant techniques for incorporation into future school construction projects.

For the record, a summary of our community activity and work projects has been submitted.

The Partnership is continuing to work on dozens of ways to minimize financial impacts of our next hurricane event. Project Impact has allowed local communities to best define their needs as opposed to following a manual generalized for the entire country.

If you analyze the disaster recovery process, the majority of the response activity is a local level. Assistance typically is needed during recovery and restoration. Restoration and recovery efforts especially for infrastructure items such as public buildings, schools, roads, and basic housing are extremely difficult to manage following any disaster for any local Government. If a community takes steps to reduce the effects of a future disaster, especially areas experiencing repetitive events, it is simple to understand that the pressures of local Government can be reduced. Surprisingly, most

of our disaster outcomes are no longer unknowns. Mitigation dollars spent now in partnership with local communities will be our road map to reduction in future losses.

Recently one of our local elected officials put Project Impact in this perspective: "Look at what our Nation has accomplished supporting the concepts of recycling and seatbelts. In these programs, we have invested in public education, research, and demonstration grant funding. By supporting predisaster mitigation funding opportunities, a national disaster mitigation ethic will begin to emerge." This ethic or change in the way we handle disasters is the best way we know to begin the process of reducing disaster losses.

In closing, I cannot begin to tell you the excitement and dedication my community has developed regarding Project Impact and the common sense approach to predisaster mitigation. My communities, especially large and small businesses, feels that it's Government at its best because the activities and the programs are flexible and community based. I ask you to be patient and give this some time. We all know that new predisaster mitigation strategies will take time to conceive, develop, and implement on a State and local level. Your pre- and post-disaster mitigation funding will in time begin to show some very tangible results.

I thank you for this opportunity. I hope you'll give strong consideration to opening long-term regulatory doors for FEMA and allow a community-based disaster mitigation funding and mitigation ethic to be borne. Thank you, and may I answer any questions that you might have.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Summers. We appreciate all of you being here today.

Mayor Daub, you said something about some language that you would recommend as it relates to SBA. So I would ask you, and maybe even while you're still here, and this would be for the rest of you too, as I asked Director Witt to do, any suggestions you have, now is the time to share them. If not at the table orally, if you would try to get your suggestions in because, as I said earlier, we may be going into a markup and the whole purpose of this is to get your input on that. So I would ask you to do that.

Mayor Daub, not in your relationship and representing the National League of Cities, but as Mayor of Omaha, you mentioned reauthorization perhaps in the year 2002 or devolving. Looking at it right now from your city's perspective, which would be your choice at that time?

Mayor Daub. We have had several very serious experiences. One I alluded to in my opening remarks, which was 12 inches of wet snow before the leaves fell in our very treed city that created a huge disaster environment and was declared and a substantial amount of FEMA effort and Federal taxpayers' money is going to go into the cleanup, if you will, and the restoration improvement of a large amount of public property. We're now looking at the flooding potential along our Missouri River and what kind of predisaster mitigation effort in the floodway and the flood plain we can engage in.

So the function of this set of criterion being put into the Stafford Act gives me hope that with the studies that are also required we'll know enough by the year 2002 to say that the effort we're making

is working or isn't working. If we can develop best practices and really involve local municipalities in these efforts, I think that we'll be in a position to create a reauthorization. But I support the sunset requirement because it gives us a chance to evaluate.

Senator INHOFE. Mayor Daub, having been a mayor myself, maybe I'm the only one who picked up on this from your testimony, the very last sentence, I heard something that sounded an awful lot like a concern or fear of a future unfunded mandate. Did I?

Mayor Daub. Yes. And I would urge you to be very clear about one of the reasons that I'm here as a mayor and one of the reasons I'm here on behalf of the League, we want you to continue to avoid the unfunded mandate but recognize that the Federal dollar appropriately invested in predisaster mitigation work should help us to avoid the other wrenching experiences of seeing municipal funding levels, at the Federal Government perhaps cut back and/or the need for supplementals because of these unexpected disasters. So it is a function of us trying to maintain our commitment to you to support balanced budget activity but at the same time doing those smart things that intervene and are preventive that will save money and lives in the long run.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you.

Mr. Myers, you mentioned in your testimony the level at \$50 million. I anticipate when we come into markup that there are going to be some amendments that are going to address the funding levels over the next 5 years. I've already expressed myself earlier in my opening remarks as to where I'm coming from on this. But how did you happen to use those figures in your opening statement? What did you base that on?

Mr. MYERS. The \$50 million is something that we within our organization have looked at as a consistent across the board. What we have seen is it's been a sliding scale. We think if we continue showing the commitment, it is going to give us the opportunity to leverage more private dollars by showing that commitment to that private sector, which is critical I think to the entire success of this whole initiative. So that's where we are on that.

Senator INHOFE. All right. Thank you, Mr. Myers.

Mr. Ashwood, as you know, Tulsa has been selected as a community to participate in Project Impact. I think one reason is not just because I Chair this committee, that probably had something to do with it, but it's that we have historically done some things where we've provided a leadership role. When I was mayor of Tulsa, for example, in our flood program, we had the same problems for over 20 years and it got to the point where it was almost predictable what was going to happen. So we took the initiative and established a program in Tulsa that has ever since then met that disaster. So I think we're kind of a poster child for that success story.

I would ask you if you have any comments about what you anticipate will happen in the city of Tulsa, and then how that might relate to other communities in Oklahoma.

Mr. ASHWOOD. I think it is important to point out that Tulsa was selected in Oklahoma because they are a model community. They are a community that has already taken the steps, following the Memorial Day flood of 1984, to take care of themselves.

Senator INHOFE. Yes, I remember it well.

Mr. ASHWOOD. That's what we're trying to do with Project Impact. What we're trying to do is we're trying to set up a model community in Oklahoma by which other communities within the State can look at and say we can do that at our local level. I think it's very important to realize that if a community started today as a Project Impact community with a little seed money and in 5 years they were at the level that Tulsa is right now, we would probably all be saying that is a success story.

What we're doing with Tulsa is trying to take it that step further and to have them recognize that there are more hazards that they have in Tulsa, Oklahoma besides just the flooding impact, with all the refineries and the hazardous materials that are along the Arkansas River as well as the tornado hazard that they experience every spring in Oklahoma.

Senator INHOFE. You can almost set your watch, can't you?

Mr. ASHWOOD. You bet.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you very much, Mr. Ashwood.

Senator Graham?

Senator GRAHAM. Mr. Chairman, I believe the full committee is going to start meeting at 10:45, is that right?

Senator INHOFE. That's correct.

Senator GRAHAM. So given the fact of our time limitations—

Senator INHOFE. What I would suggest doing is just doing this round of questioning, and then I've already prepared them for written questions they can respond to as quickly as possible.

Senator GRAHAM. That's exactly what I was going to do, Mr. Chairman, is sort of lay out what are some questions that I would be interested in that you might respond to in writing. I would like to underscore what the Chairman said about the timeliness of this because I know it is his hope to move this as quickly as possible so that we have the best chance of actually accomplishing our legislative objective this year.

The way I approach policy issues is what I call the medical model; which is, first you ask the diagnostic questions—what's wrong with the patient. In this case, what's wrong with our current approach to mitigation, something that sounds so common sense as taking steps to avoid unnecessarily adding to the pain of a crisis? What are the current inhibitions to doing that, or what are some of the absent incentives in order to be able to effectively implement a mitigation strategy? Then you turn after diagnosis to prescription. What do you do about the problems that you've identified? And I would break those into two categories; one, those in which we think we know enough about to provide a prescription, and second, those that we don't enough about that we need to send to a specialist to get further consultation.

And staying within that construct, what are the areas of disaster mitigation do you believe that we know enough about in order to make a decision today as to what to do; and second, which of those that we need to send to the specialist by, for instance, and I believe, Mayor, you commented, the number of studies that were called for in this bill where we need to ask somebody else give us the benefit of your further thought before we solidify on what our solution would be? All of those questions are in the context of this legislation. To what degree does this legislation capture what you

think is the proper diagnosis of the problem, prescription, and then submission for further consultation, and where you recommend that it be modified in order to comport with your assessment of the situation?

Someone mentioned the issue of shelters in their remarks, and I would use that as one specific example. I know in our State I think a diagnosis of where are you going to put all these folks in the time of crisis would indicate that while we showed a very good ability, and I commend Mr. Myers specifically for that, to ramp up shelters in the face of the fire crisis and several thousands of people were housed on almost an hour-by-hour basis as a result of that, we still have a deficiency in structurally acceptable shelters for hurricanes, floods, and other potential large-scale disruptions. Do we know enough about that issue of deficiency to say now that here's what the Federal Government's role should be in assisting local communities in providing that capacity, or do we need to learn more about this before we determine what our prescription should be, and what are the questions that we ought to be asking of the specialist in that specific area so that we'll make more informed judgments in the future?

So, I would appreciate if you could approach this issue from that medical model and give us the benefit of your suggestions so that we could incorporate them as we start the markup process.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Sessions?

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, I also would submit some written questions. But I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

I want to thank you for your participation. I look forward to studying your written remarks. I believe we're on to a project that could help our disaster areas and save the taxpayers some money at the same time. Thank you very much.

Senator INHOFE. I thank you. And also with the presence of our committee chairman, a reminder that not only do we have our full committee meeting, but it's going to be in this room. So I think we had better prepare to call this to a halt.

I would remind you again that we do have questions that you'll be receiving and we would like to get an early response because we're going to move this along pretty fast.

I appreciate very much all of you coming and appreciate your testifying today. Thank you.

The subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:45 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

[Additional statements submitted for the record follow:]

TESTIMONY OF JAMES L. WITT, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Senator Graham and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be here before you today, and for the chance to express my appreciation for the support Congress has continued to provide FEMA.

As we meet here today, FEMA staff, both full-time and reservists, are spread out across the country working with communities to help them respond to the losses and the misery that natural disasters leave in their wake. Whether it is the fires in Florida and Texas, the tornadoes that spun across the south and Midwest last

spring, or the recent flooding in New England, all of these events have a tragic common denominator; a loss not only of lives and property, but hope as well.

What makes me proud of our efforts at FEMA is that the assistance we deliver is a message to all of these different areas that the Nation cares about what has happened to them and wants to help. It is very important to remember that when we declare a disaster it is based on a stipulation from the State that the situation is beyond their capacity to respond. At that point, the help we deliver is making a difference in removing not just wreckage and debris, but removing doubts about a community's ability to recovery and prosper in the future.

The future of emergency management, and FEMA's role in that future is a great part of what I want to talk about today. I have been blessed to serve a President who cares deeply about the affect disasters have on our people and their communities, as well as a Congress that has recognized and supported our efforts. And I am equally pleased to serve at an Agency that makes a big difference in peoples lives.

Our staff works very hard. But we are also fortunate because we get to work as partners with some of the best people in the country; the public safety forces, the emergency managers, the floodplain managers, the private relief organizations that help out during disasters, and the local people in communities that are forced to respond under the most pressing circumstances.

During my time at FEMA I have had the good fortune to meet many of these outstanding people across the country. I have met brave people determined to rebuild their homes and their communities and really giving people that always think of others first—whether its school children or the elderly—and how they can be helped after a disaster. We should celebrate the spirit of these people—they are an inspiration to all of us.

But, starting today, I hope you'll join me in meeting these people before disasters occur. Through Project Impact, our predisaster mitigation program, we have begun to harness these energies and make meaningful changes in communities to lessen the effects of disaster.

Hope doesn't have to follow a tragedy—hope can be there in the early steps we take to make our schools and businesses and homes safer and stronger.

In that light, this is an historic hearing since your legislation provides increased legislative authority for predisaster mitigation. And that fact marks an important new phase in the evolution of emergency management. We appreciate the fact that the Senate's Draft Bill is authorizing this program and hope that the funding levels can match the real threats we face. The Administration has proposed an open-ended authorization, and the President's fiscal year 1999 Budget included a request of \$50 million for this program. We believe that these levels will increase the actual awareness and implementation of mitigation measures.

This needs to be a program that is flexible enough to fit the varying needs of a lot of different communities facing different threats. However, to be successful, this program needs to inspire confidence in FEMA's ability to be a steady and dependable partner with the business community. An authorization that decreases over time puts our commitment into question and decreases our capacity to reach out to many more communities across the country that face real risks of disaster damage and want to be a part of this new partnership.

Over the last 5 years we have instituted a lot of changes at FEMA. Not change just for the sake of change, but changes that have both reduced the risk of future disasters and improved the delivery of assistance to disaster victims while cutting down on our administrative costs to provide that help. At every step of that process we have worked closely with our State emergency management partners, as well as the involved Committees of Congress, to improve both our disaster response and recovery programs and the efforts we are making to mitigate against the need for those programs.

I would now like to review some of the changes we've made in our mitigation and disaster response and recovery programs and the difference those changes have made. In that discussion we will also comment on the provisions in the Senate's Draft Bill that affect these programs and provide our comments on those suggested changes.

Mitigation

While I am proud of the way we have improved our programs, in both speed and quality of service, it is also very important to remember that we have also greatly improved our accountability for the funds that are spent for disaster relief. But we have to do more.

We've got to change the way we deal with disasters or we are doomed to pay for poor planning in lost lives and lost property, over and over and over again. We must

put an end to the damage, repair, damage and repair cycle. The most effective way to break this cycle and reduce the cost of disasters is by preventing them through mitigation. Money spent now on mitigation—either pre- or post-disaster—will be reflected in future budget requests and appropriations actions.

Mitigation is the cornerstone of emergency management. It involves keeping homes away from floodplains, engineering bridges to withstand earthquakes, and promoting adoption and enforcement of effective building codes to protect property and people from natural hazards. Mitigation describes the ongoing effort at the Federal, State, local, and individual levels to lessen the impact of disasters upon our families, homes, communities and economy. Mitigation should be viewed as the fundamental means to decrease demands for disaster response resources.

FEMA started emphasizing mitigation in 1993 with the creation of the Agency's Mitigation Directorate. In the aftermath of the 1993 Midwest Floods, we worked with the Administration and the Congress to initiate a property buyout program that removed over 20,000 properties from the floodplain and returned them to open space land use. In fact, Senator Chafee was one of the leaders in this effort and was instrumental in achieving its passage.

We have placed greater emphasis on rebuilding communities safer and stronger after disaster strikes and on preparing for risk before disaster strikes. We appreciate the work that has been done in the Senate Subcommittee's Draft Bill, which recognizes the contribution mitigation makes to reducing future impacts.

Project Impact Our predisaster mitigation initiative, Project Impact, joins the public and private sectors in cities and towns across the Nation to build disaster-resistant communities. Project Impact's goal is to change the way America prevents and prepares for disasters. The initiative helps communities protect themselves from the devastating effects of natural disasters by taking actions that dramatically reduce disruption and loss. Project Impact operates on a common-sense damage-reduction approach, basing its work and planning on three simple principles: preventive actions must be decided at the local level; private sector participation is vital; and long-term efforts and investments in prevention measures are essential.

This is government at its best, serving as a catalyst so that people have the resources and know-how to make a difference in their lives and their communities. The private sector is the key in the new way we are looking at this. When we meet with private sector representatives we ask them for three commitments: one, do something to protect your company; two, do something to protect your employees; and three, do something for your community. The response has been wonderfully rewarding.

Building on the pilot program, 6 weeks ago we launched the initiative nationally by inviting 50 additional localities to become Project Impact communities. There is no doubt that this is a common sense approach for the way America deals with disasters. The incentive is clear: a disaster resistant community is able to bounce back from a natural disaster with far less loss of property and consequently much less cost for repairs. Moreover, the time lost from productive activity is minimized for both businesses and their employees.

As I noted earlier, we would appreciate an authorization for the program similar to the Administration's proposal, which was open-ended. That would send a strong and positive message to the many communities across this country that are anxious to be a part of this new approach. Also, rather than indicating an intent to sunset a program of such promise, I believe we should agree to report to you on the program after the 5-year period and then have the committee decide what course to take. I believe strongly that the signal we need to send is that we are making a difference with hazard reduction through programs like the buyouts and Project Impact.

We also believe it is important that Pre-Disaster Mitigation be a separate fund within the FEMA budget. A separate fund would allow us to better manage and support the program and the special administrative support it requires, such as travel to disaster-resistant communities to provide technical assistance and support.

Given the level of interest and the number of communities in every State that would like to participate, we think the authorized levels of funding in the Subcommittee's Draft Bill are inadequate to do the necessary work at the local level. By reducing the level of funding each year we send a contradictory message, pointing to a lack of commitment from Federal partners. We would strongly encourage increased funding levels that would reflect a program with increasing participation by the business sector in communities of all sizes in all regions of the country facing many differing hazards.

We also believe that there must be an emphasis on the protection of community infrastructure, which is a strong component of the current program. The more a community does to protect, for example, its water treatment facilities, the sooner

that community can bounce back from a disaster event. FEMA enters this program as a partner, and a partner does not dictate choices. But we also want this to be a program dedicated specifically to mitigating against disaster threats, not a block grant for any community project. Also, we believe that the public education activities in the communities need to be a part of the program. Public education is key to informed support and involvement at the local level and we believe the legislation should encourage that work.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Section 404 of the Stafford Act authorizes our Howard Mitigation Grant Program. HMGP enables mitigation measures to be implemented during immediate recovery from a disaster. The program's intent is to reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, and suffering in an area affected by a major disaster, and to ultimately reduce the future needs for Federal disaster assistance by encouraging the building of an environment increasingly resistant to the effects of natural hazards.

Under the HMGP, an amount equal to 15 percent of our total funds spent on a disaster may be spent specifically on hazard mitigation measures. Under the Senate Draft Bill this amount is raised up to 20 percent. We believe this will have a significant and immediate impact in reducing disaster risks across the nation. This will provide greater resources to FEMA and the States to address repetitive flood loss and to take other mitigation measures such as seismic retrofitting and wind-resistant preventive measures.

In addition to property buyouts, I have some examples of other types of things we've accomplished through this program. We've assisted towns in installing river icejam control structures to reduce downstream flooding. We've elevated buildings to protect them from flooding. We've strengthened structures to withstand seismic activity. We've helped State and local government develop mitigation plans.

The types of activities permitted under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program have made a great impact in areas affected by disasters. Let me give you an example. After the devastating Midwest floods of 1993, we were able to acquire thousands of flood-prone properties and move them out of the floodplain. The land was left in open space use for recreational or wetlands use. Two years later in 1995, when many of the same areas flooded again, the structures did not flood because they were out of harm's way. And emergency funds did not have to be spent protecting those same structures. And disaster funds were not spent repairing homes or rebuilding the infrastructure in this area. These formulations contribute to the great savings that come from mitigation.

Given the demonstrated effectiveness of such mitigation actions, we believe that the President's proposal for Pre-Disaster Mitigation strongly supports our concentration on these efforts. The Subcommittee's Draft marks a departure from old approaches and offers the promise of real reductions, not only in disaster costs but also in the threats to our families and our communities.

However, the provision that totally transfers Section 404 to the States is unnecessary in that many of these changes have already been accomplished and the statutory change may dissolve a needed and logical partnership rather than devolve responsibility.

With mitigation programs maturing and real results based on repetitive disasters coming to light, it is apparent that this is the area in which we need to continue to move forward. This Committee is to be congratulated for recognizing the worth of mitigation in the bill. However, we strongly believe that the Pre-Disaster Mitigation section needs authorized levels which that will send a clear message that we are going to work with many communities to reduce the disaster risks they face.

I would now like to address my comments to our disaster response and recovery programs; the changes we have made and the changes that are proposed in the legislation.

Individual Assistance

The emphasis we have placed on making help to families and individuals more accessible and delivering that help faster has been a great benefit for the people affected and has also had rewarding results for the Federal Government. To speed up service and reduce the administrative costs of registering disaster assistance applicants and processing applications, FEMA consolidated multiple functions previously performed at individual disaster sites or regional offices. In concert with that activity, FEMA has instituted an automated registration system for disaster victims at the National Teleregistration Centers.

The Teleregistration Centers have resulted in not only making the application process easier for those affected by disasters but have also had a positive impact on customer service. People applying for assistance are helped promptly, get consistent answers, and are treated with respect. Also, the cost savings of on-line process-

ing at a teleregistration center versus processing a paper application at a Disaster Application Center are approximately \$46 per application. At an average of 350,000 registrations per year, the annual savings are approximately \$16 million.

After registrations are received, processing begins. This used to be a cumbersome process, done on an ad hoc basis and spread out among many field offices and regional offices. FEMA has now established three National Processing Service Centers. The consolidation of services permits FEMA to avoid the time delay and cost of establishing the necessary computer networks in disaster field locations each time there is a disaster.

In addition, we now apply pen-based computer technology to help verify applicants' needs, which allows inspectors to record more rapidly and accurately the damage to homes and personal property. Use of this technology also saves the expense of manual data entry. Centralized processing saves approximately \$75 per case over our former field processing. With an average of 300,000 cases processed annually, the savings are about \$22.5 million per year.

What is also noteworthy about these improvements is how they have accelerated the provision of aid. The 1-800 number we now employ, coupled with the other changes I have described, has shortened the time needed to deliver financial assistance for FEMA's Temporary Housing program from several weeks to several days.

In fact, the average time it takes from the time a disaster victim calls in to the time that a housing inspector visits and their first temporary housing check is delivered, used to be measured in weeks. It is now about 7 to 10 days. In the near future we will be implementing Electronic Fund Transfer, making it possible for many victims to receive temporary housing funds even quicker.

We have also combined logistical functions into three Territorial Logistics Centers. This means that instead of renting hundreds of warehouses across the country we have three focal points that can support our field activities at a moment's notice. Additionally, we do not re-invent the wheel—or pay for a new wheel—with each disaster declaration. Instead we retain our equipment, such as computers and fax machines, refurbish and upgrade the equipment, and send it back out for use in the next disaster.

These changes we have described are relatively new, but they are positive improvements in the way we deliver supplemental disaster assistance. I will now address certain changes to Individual Assistance programs that are contemplated in the Senate's Draft Bill, which we are considering today.

The bill provides for combining the temporary housing and Individual and Family Grants program, now administered separately, into a single program which can address the real and personal property needs of disaster victims, funded at 100 percent Federal share and administered by FEMA. At present the temporary housing program is 100 percent federally funded and administered by FEMA, but the Individual and Family Grant Program (IFG) is funded 75 percent by FEMA, 25 percent by states, and administered by states. We do not object to this provision.

Our specific hope is that we can have a consistent program. Currently several States are able to administer the IFG program effectively while others have a need for more staff and support to handle this occasional function. The proposal would be of great benefit to that second group. From FEMA's standpoint, any change that makes our role more consistent in each disaster would be a help to our staff in delivering good customer service in a cost-effective manner.

Other provisions of the bill addressing the sale of manufactured homes after disasters and the ability to provide more extensive housing programs in remote island locations will help to reduce costs and improve services in those parts of FEMA's jurisdiction in which the standard financial assistance programs are not appropriate.

Public Assistance

Public Assistance is our term for Infrastructure repair. FEMA's program to fund the repair or restoration of damaged infrastructure after a disaster is being refined and improved. This improvement will both reduce administrative costs and, more importantly, streamline our processes for our State and local partners.

We've redesigned our Public Assistance program to improve customer service to applicants and increase satisfaction among state and local participants, to expedite the obligation of Federal grant money, and to reduce the administrative costs of disaster management. The New Public Assistance program goals are achieved by organizing recovery around the needs of the applicant. The New PA program consists of four principal components:

Process.—The process was redesigned from preliminary damage assessment to closeout, resulting in the creation of a partnership among FEMA, State and local participants utilizing the strengths of each.

Policy.—Our policy goals are to simplify and clarify policy, make policy information openly available to our customers, and utilize the Internet for policy information distribution

People.—New roles and responsibilities were created within the PA work force, as well as a redefinition of existing ones, and training and credentialing will be required.

Performance.—Performance measures have been developed to assure compliance with GPRA, and ensure continual program improvement and customer satisfaction.

A pilot test was conducted jointly with the Commonwealth of Kentucky on a Presidentially declared disaster from May to July 1998. The pilot provided an opportunity to simulate a full-scale operation of the New PA program in a controlled real-time environment, allowing for the validation and refinement of the new process prior to organization-wide implementation. The pilot confirmed the feasibility of the New PA program, identified key aspects of the redesign that may require change and gauged the organizational inclination to change its culture in support of the new process. The pilot successfully demonstrated the following:

- The ability of applicants to formulate eligible scopes of work and cost estimates
- The value of a single point of coordination to assist applicants
- The ability to expediently obligate funds to the state and effectively manage quicker grant close-outs
- The ability to identify and address Hazard Mitigation grant opportunities and other Special Considerations issues early in the process

- The ability to establish an environment of mutual trust and respect with the Commonwealth and local applicants

Two key observations of the pilot process were—

- 95 percent of all projects (403 out of 422 total) were under the \$47,100 small project threshold resulting in significant administrative savings by having the applicant, rather than FEMA and State staff, write Damage Survey Reports.
- 80 percent of projects were obligated within 60 days, greatly contributing to increased customer satisfaction.

Our Public Assistance Grant Acceleration Program is currently being implemented in the Northridge Long-term Recovery Area Of lice. Under this program, a fixed level of funding is provided to cover the estimated total cost of eligible repair to damaged facilities. Rather than wait until final actual repair costs are determined, settlement offers are made based upon industry standard estimates, bringing administrative closure to long-term projects. This Grant Acceleration Program is the model for the cost-estimating procedure that the Senate's Draft Bill will help us to implement. Thus far, 99 projects have been accepted for a total of \$163 million.

We've also redesigned our Public Assistance Program as a whole. The program now focuses on customer service by emphasizing effective partnering among FEMA, State, and local governments. We have worked closely with representatives from State emergency management offices and local officials to ensure that the redesigned program reflects their concerns and needs. The result is a program that focuses on streamlining operations, clarifies program eligibility and policies, simplifies the process, and forges stronger alliances with State and local governments. This helps communities recover from disasters through more efficient and consistent program delivery.

We appreciate some of the provisions in the Draft Bill, such as the cost-estimates provision I noted earlier, that will help us to carry out our new vision for the Public Assistance program. also would support pilot projects that would contribute to further responsible streamlining of Section 406 under which the Public Assistance program operates.

I hope I have been able to give you a better understanding of not only how FEMA regards certain provisions in the Senate Subcommittee's Draft Bill but also, generally, how FEMA has been operating over the last 5 years. I have highlighted some of the steps we have taken to cut some of those costs, particularly in mitigating against future disasters and their associated costs. These steps are significant and I am especially proud that they have resulted in not just cost reductions, but better service for the people most in need—the disaster victims and communities who have been devastated by disaster events.

Just as with predisaster mitigation, this hearing is a good example of how we are able to discuss our emergency management policies outside of the context of an actual disaster event and consider what we can do to reduce the pain and suffering caused by disasters through sound public policy. While we respectfully object to some provisions of the bill you are considering, we also appreciate the careful attention you are giving to the work we do. It matters to millions of Americans and getting it right is important. Any changes we make will be reflected in the depth and quality of not only our response to disasters in the future, but also our ability to reduce their impact on our communities.

I thank you for your time and attention. I deeply appreciate the support you have given me and all of the great FEMA staff since I came into this job. The confidence you have shown in us has helped us do a job that matters to people in great distress. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

PROJECT IMPACT

Community Service

- College student installing non-structural earthquake mitigation measure for low-income housing resident (Oakland, CA);
- High school student clearing yard debris that would pose a hazard in the event of a hurricane (Wilmington, NC);
- Volunteers installing donated hurricane shutters in low-income senior citizen neighborhood (Deerfield Beach, FL);
- Newspaper article on college students participating in flood damage reduction activities in Randolph/Tucker Counties, West Virginia.

Individual Empowerment

- Home workshops on hurricane damage prevention measures available from local retailers;
- Hazard Mitigation Fact Sheets—mitigation measures to protect homes and businesses;
- Newspaper article on Seattle, Washington's Self-help Home Earthquake Retrofit Course available through neighborhood community centers.

Financial Incentives

- Citizens National Bank of Elkins, WV, display to promote the availability of flood mitigation loans (Bank President and FEMA Director James L. Witt in forefront);
- Financial institutions developing mitigation loan packages in Project Impact communities;
- Merchant & Marine Bank of Pascagoula, MS, hurricane season flyer to announce the availability of reduced rate mitigation loans.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE HAL DAUB, MAYOR, OMAHA, NE, MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES, AND IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIRMAN OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Senator Graham and members of the subcommittee. I want to thank you for inviting me to testify this morning on behalf of the National League of Cities (NLC). I am pleased to represent NLC, the largest and oldest organization representing some 140,000 municipal elected leaders from nearly 17,000 cities and towns.

I am in my second term as mayor of Omaha, Nebraska, moving up after service in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1981–1989. Currently I am a member of the Board of Directors of the National League of Cities, and last year I served as the Chairman of NLC's Public Safety and Crime Prevention Steering Committee which is responsible for developing NLC policy on all issues related to public safety. This committee considers and recommends policy related to all aspects of natural and manmade disasters. I am testifying for NLC today as a member of the organization's board.

Before I present NLC's comments on the "Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act," I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for your outreach to cities and other stakeholders with roles in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.

When a community is overwhelmed by a major disaster, the local government must look to the State and federal government for assistance and to coordinate response and recovery activities. So, it is important that we take the same approach as we work with your subcommittee, FEMA and other stakeholders to develop authorizing language for Project Impact.

NLC is committed to a balanced federal budget and deficit reduction which requires us to work with all levels of government to actually reduce costs. We believe this must and can be done without simply shifting federal responsibilities and costs to state and local governments. And we believe an increasing number of severe dis-

asters, as well as increased urbanization and other factors, are largely responsible for escalating federal, state, and local disaster-related costs.

The offsets needed in recent years for federal supplemental appropriations to pay for disasters have largely come out of programs of great importance to cities. So it is no surprise that NLC members support reducing the need for supplementals through cost effective activities to substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, and suffering from major disasters.

Almost two-thirds of federal disaster costs are from damage to public facilities and infrastructure. And we know all disasters are local. Thus it is essential that responsible local officials, both elected and professional emergency personnel, are engaged on a permanent basis in activities to increase our overall capacity to identify and assess disaster risks and to advance established mitigation strategies and priorities.

Title I—Predisaster Hazard Mitigation

NLC is very pleased that FEMA has agreed to work with you on this legislation to establish State and local predisaster mitigation partnerships which will actively engage the private sector and nonprofit organizations in creating disaster resistant communities. We believe this will help improve and expand the capacity for effective mitigation activities in communities across the country.

I want to reiterate here NLC's commitment and offers to work with FEMA to help increase the awareness of local officials, the business community, and the general public of natural hazards and what they have cost or could cost if we fail to reduce them through hazard risk mitigation. (See attached letters.)

We fully support engaging the private sector in mitigation activities to reduce damage to business and private property and to get their support for developing disaster resistant public facilities and infrastructure. Also, it is essential that we encourage the private sector to limit, and where possible prevent, significant economic disruption following disasters. The health of our communities and our tax base depend on this.

Throughout this Act there is emphasis placed on the importance of federal support to and engagement of State and local governments to accomplish implementation of effective mitigation measures. We are pleased that States are called on to engage local governments in development of our comprehensive mitigation plans and programs, as well as in setting statewide priorities. This involvement will help local officials begin to recognize and analyze existing hazards and to learn how they can be reduced or eliminated through already proven mitigation approaches. We also expect FEMA to provide states and localities, in a timely fashion, information on the successes of Project Impact as they develop. This should include examples of how cities succeed in bringing the business and nonprofit sectors in as partners to create disaster resistant communities.

This involvement of cities will build on the important working relationships most cities already have with their state emergency management offices. Seed money from FEMA will help us initiate community-based mitigation activities and help cities leverage investment from other federal agencies, our state governments, and the private sector.

Setting criteria and recognizing meaningful and definable outcomes are critical if we are to determine what specific mitigation activities work and how well they work in saving lives, reducing recovery costs, and preventing major disruption in local and regional economies. The criteria you set in this Act will also facilitate objective selection by states of the localities recommended to the President for predisaster mitigation assistance.

I would like to comment on the Federal Share for mitigation which this Act would establish. A federal contribution of "up to 75 percent" leaves FEMA with authority to cover far less than 75 percent and could complicate a city's ability to develop a realistic mitigation proposal which could compete for federal funding. In many cases we are talking about rebuilding infrastructure projects which can often require capital debts.

The issuance of municipal debt requires a long-term sure source of revenue to ensure full and timely payment to our bondholders. Consequently, the flexibility to FEMA to change its share can wreak havoc in our ability to make our own capital improvements and commitments.

NLC applauds the proposal in the Act to create an interagency task force to coordinate all predisaster mitigation administered by the federal government. If the task force functions as it should, it could reduce duplication and result in efficient use of federal funds. It would also be helpful if the task force could serve as the place where records of overall federal predisaster mitigation assistance are kept. A comparative review of this assistance and its effectiveness could be most helpful for guidance in the future.

On the Act's sunset in 2003, we are hopeful that reauthorization of Project Impact, or an improved approach to predisaster mitigation, would be considered if Project Impact proves to result in significant local, state and federal savings. If we are successful, more and more communities will initiate mitigation activities and may need some seed money to help them move toward becoming truly disaster resistant communities.

Section 202. Assistance to Repair, Restore, Reconstruct, or Replace Damaged Facilities

Under this section of the Act, I would like to comment briefly on several issues of concern for cities:

The requirement that a nonprofit must apply to the SEA for a disaster loan and be rejected or receive an insufficient amount to make repairs before it could receive assistance could create a serious problem. For example, if the Red Cross were the primary service provider for persons and families displaced by a disaster and Red Cross shelters were damaged and unsafe, wouldn't it be important that needed repairs be funded immediately? Wouldn't waiting for SBA approval or rejection of a loan request create a hardship after a major disaster?

I would like to encourage the subcommittee to include in your Report on this Act language directing FEMA to provide opportunities for public comment prior to the adoption of any new or modified policies that would have potential funding impacts on state and local governments, and that the Agency does not apply such policies retroactively. It is essential that FEMA adhere to "due process" in developing guidance and regulations for this Act, particularly if FEMA chooses to clarify what public facilities are determined necessary to meet a need for governmental services and functions after a disaster.

NLC is pleased that the Act includes under "Other Eligible Activities" the costs of the National Guard and Prison Labor as well as base and overtime wages for city employees and extra hires who perform eligible work plus their fringe benefits as appropriate.

Recommendations

NLC fully supports the recommendations in the bill to:

- evaluate after 18 months the implementation of predisaster mitigation and make recommendations for a process to transfer more authority to states and localities for administering the program and a process for considering private sector predisaster mitigation initiatives;
- establish a cost estimation procedure;
- have the OCC conduct a study to examine the effectiveness of this hazard mitigation program, including a review of its goals and objectives, the cost benefit in terms of mitigation, disaster avoidance, and dollars saved and report this to Congress within 3 years;
- have the OCC estimate the reduction in Federal disaster assistance resulting from implementation of the Act;
- determine the current and future availability of disaster insurance for public infrastructure; and
- examine analytically the major disasters and emergencies which have been declared since 1974, describing the implied criteria for these declarations and how they have changed over time, and make recommendations for appropriate future criteria that should be considered when making disaster and emergency declarations under the Stafford Act.

In addition to these studies and reports recommended in this legislation, NLC would like to encourage the subcommittee to commission a study to provide us all with the best possible information on actual disaster costs incurred by local, state and federal levels of government. This information is essential if we are to determine if predisaster mitigation really reduces disaster costs. NLC would be pleased to help with collection of this data.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you again for inviting me to testify on behalf of the National League of Cities and I urge you to look to the League for continued cooperation as we work together to launch a national mitigation program and partnerships to reduce disaster costs at all levels of government.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES,
February 9, 1998.

THE HONORABLE JAMES LEE WITT, *Director*,
Federal Emergency Management Agency,
500 C Street SW,
Washington, DC 20472

DEAR DIRECTOR WITT: As President of the National League of Cities (NLC), I want to congratulate you on the excellent job you are doing as Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. I also wholeheartedly agree with your long-term policy focus on preventing disaster losses through mitigation and disaster preparedness. This could benefit all Americans, particularly taxpayers, and could prevent catastrophic damage to private and public property. This focus will be central to protecting vital public infrastructure.

NLC is a national organization representing the interests of 49 state municipal leagues, more than 135,000 locally elected officials, and 1,400 direct member cities. Through the state leagues, we work with 17,000 municipalities.

Over the years, cities have worked closely with FEMA when overwhelmed by both natural disasters and terrorists incidents. Recovery in these instances would not have been possible without help from the federal government, principally FEMA. NLC's staff has worked productively with your staff to encourage cities to improve disaster preparedness and to reduce, through mitigation and enlightened zoning and land use planning, loss of life and damage to both public and private property. We would like to see even greater collaboration between FEMA and NLC. I believe NLC could come to the table with a variety of ideas and suggestions for cost reductions. Currently, we are working with a coalition to develop proactive approaches to disaster cost reduction.

Last fall, NLC in cooperation with a broad coalition of national, state and local groups opposed many of the Stafford Act amendments FEMA recommended to Congress and the Senate appropriators attached to S.1034. While we supported many of the provisions in the bill designed to reduce costs at all levels of government, we opposed the proposals which would have simply shifted federal costs to state and local governments. NLC's key priorities are federal deficit reduction and a balanced budget. We believe this should be accomplished through equitable cuts across the federal budget, not through shifts of responsibilities and costs to local government. Also, appropriators regularly dip into programs important to cities to offset disaster supplementals. For these reasons, NLC would like to work more actively with FEMA and Congress to find ways to reduce natural disaster costs.

With this in mind, NLC would like to augment FEMA's efforts to educate local elected officials about the importance of disaster preparedness and mitigation. Damage to and loss of public property from natural disasters represents, by far, the bulk of the costs stemming from these events. Disaster costs will never diminish significantly without reducing the vulnerability of public property.

In light of this, we would like to help in any way we can with your Project Impact Initiative. We would be pleased to work with FEMA to develop criteria for Project Impact and to contribute ideas toward an equitable selection process. The criteria could include performance measures to evaluate progress and report successes. A state-by-state competition might be the best way to encourage communities to learn about the project and to communicate with their state emergency managers. Although Project Impact may only be able to reward a grant to one community in each state, increased understanding of the importance of mitigation and mitigation activities would occur in many localities.

Please consider these offers and suggestions and let me know what you think. Have your staff contact Frank Shafroth, NLC's Director of Policy and Federal Relations, to discuss how we can increase our cooperation. Mr. Shafroth can be reached at (202) 626-3023.

Sincerely,

BRIAN J. O'NEILL, *President*,
Councilman, Philadelphia, PA.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES,
August 8, 1997.

MR. BRIAN COWAN, *Program Assistant*,
Office of Policy and Regional Operations
FEMA
500 C Street, SW,

Washington, DC 20472.

DEAR BRIAN: Thanks so much for meeting with us this morning. I know you have plenty of responsibilities without having to take lots of time with the concerns of NACo and NLC. However, I am optimistic we may be able to make your job easier and ultimately contribute to the short and long-term success of FEMA's Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative. As I said this morning, I believe NLC must find effective ways to grab the attention of elected officials and get them seriously committed to natural disaster mitigation in their communities.

On my return to the office, I checked our direct member list and our committee membership rosters. Deerfield Beach is an active direct member of NLC and they have one of the city's commissioners on our Public Safety and Crime Prevention Committee (PSCP). Commissioner Gwendolen Clarke-Reed of Deerfield Beach is committed to improving how her city deals with natural disasters before, during and after they occur. I am sure she is enthusiastic about FEMA's Disaster Resistant Communities Initiative. I am also confident that she will report to the PSCP Committee on the progress of the initiative and we could encourage her to write an article for the paper when things have progressed to a stage that there is something positive to report. We could also encourage the mayor and/or the commissioner to participate in workshops at our semiannual meetings. In addition, the Mayor and Gwen will probably share the results of the initiative with all Florida cities through the Florida League of Cities. These are suggestions on what we can do in the context of Deerfield Beach to build, within our membership better understanding of the importance of mitigation, as well as more interest and enthusiasm at the local level for moving forward with appropriate mitigation plans and activities.

Other direct members of NLC which have been selected to participate in this initiative are: Oakland, CA, Pascagoula, MI, Seattle, WA, and Wilmington, NC. We can report their progress occasionally if this is appropriate or do something that might include all of them at some type of event or in a special publication possibly.

Attached are several articles from "Quality Cities, April, 1996" published by the Florida League of Cities. I get the impression that counties are indeed responsible for emergency management in Florida. However, as I read between the lines, whatever the counties have done may not seem sufficient in the eyes of some local governments. As the articles indicate, many cities have hired or designated an employee to be the local emergency manager. None-the-less, even with a local manager I am certain there is still considerable local dependence on the counties to take the lead.

Again, many thanks for meeting with Don Murray and me this morning. Do let me know where and when we can help generate interest among local governments in the mitigation initiatives FEMA will undertake with seven localities and the progress we expect they will demonstrate.

Sincerely,

CAMERON D. WHITMAN
Senior Legislative Counsel

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH F. MYERS, DIRECTOR, FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for allowing the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed "Disaster Mitigation Act of 1998." NEMA represents state and territorial emergency management directors who are responsible to their governors for developing and maintaining an integrated and responsive emergency management system.

My name is Joseph F. Myers. I am the director of Florida's Division of Emergency Management. For the past 2 years, I have had the pleasure to serve as Chairman of NEMA's Mitigation Committee. It has been NEMA's contention that the most effective way to reduce our nation's vulnerability to the impacts of disasters is through the application of mitigation programs while maintaining an effective preparedness capability. We believe the proposed legislation supports this shared goal of reducing our nations vulnerability to disasters and the costs in lost lives and property.

First, let me commend this committee for taking the time to hold hearings on this very important topic. Revising the Stafford Act to address predisaster mitigation, streamline assistance and reduce costs is very important to every state in this nation. It is particularly appropriate to consider such changes in the authorizing committee, where those who have the ability to consider issues of this magnitude can reflect upon the far reaching impacts these changes will have on the entire emer-

gency management community, with its many varied but related Federal and state programs and stakeholders.

This bill properly focuses our collective efforts toward a sustainable system of managing disasters and their consequences. This bill prioritizes the use of our resources and recognizes the critical importance of breaking an ever more expensive cycle of destruction and rebuilding. We should become focused on creating sustainable communities, able to reduce the impacts of disasters, thereby reducing our dependence on federal, state, and local recovery dollars. This legislation is an important milestone in the effort to modify the built environment and ensure both pre- and post disaster construction and development practices that will survive disasters. This legislation dovetails with our emphasis on streamlining current assistance programs, expediting the recovery of those who need it most, the victims.

NEMA applauds the Federal Emergency Management Agency for their aggressive efforts to improve our nations' emergency management system. Under the leadership of Director James Lee Witt, FEMA has worked hard in partnership with NEMA on several new initiatives that, given time, will radically improve our emergency management system. Focused efforts to close out old disasters; implementing the Public Assistance streamlining initiative; and, designating capable states to become "Mitigation Management States," to reduce costs and streamline the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, are just some of Director Witt's innovations. Each of these initiatives have already had dramatic, and positive impacts on state and local emergency management agencies.

NEMA and FEMA have worked in tandem on initiatives to cut disaster related costs. NEMA and FEMA have addressed many proposals and working together, we believe that mutually agreeable solutions can be found. At a recent meeting with Director Witt, the NEMA leadership committed to work in partnership with FEMA to develop fair and objective disaster declaration criteria, a Congressional concern for many years. Declaration criteria will help state emergency management agencies know, before a disaster strikes, the necessary thresholds that trigger a major disaster declaration. This knowledge will save time, minimize false expectations, and ensure equity in declaration decisions.

Overall, our impression of the proposed "Disaster Mitigation Act of 1998" is very favorable. We believe, if passed, it will have a beneficial impact on reducing the spiraling costs of disasters. Both NEMA and FEMA have emphasized the importance of initiating predisaster mitigation efforts as a powerful way to reduce our increasing vulnerability to natural and non natural disasters. The bill will also streamline components of the Public and Individual Assistance Programs and reduce the costs of these programs.

More specifically, we agree with the concept underlying Section 101. The emergency management community must institutionalize the focus on mitigation if we are to reverse the escalating costs of disasters. Without effective mitigation at both the federal, state and local level we will be kept in a cycle of repetitive losses, which disrupt lives and destroys property. At the same time we must be consolidate and continue to improve on our preparedness and response initiatives.

While we applaud the efforts to engage the states in the selection of those communities who will benefit from the predisaster mitigation funding, we realize the President will ultimately determine which of these communities will be selected. We encourage the Committee to revise the selection process to be a shared responsibility of the President and the Governors of each state. This will ensure that the selection process will benefit from the unique insights of the Governors, and enhance the "partnership" concept between the Federal Government, each state, and each eligible community.

A five-year commitment of significant funding to this mitigation effort is equally appreciated. If mitigation is going to have a real impact on cost reduction, we must take the initiative to fund it at levels that will ensure success. Therefore, we recommend that the level of funding remain, at a minimum, consistent with the first year's allocation of \$50 million, and not decrease each succeeding year. This will ensure a sustained and strategic effort into the new millennium.

In Section 107, we applaud increasing the contribution for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program from the current 15 percent, to the proposed 20 percent. This will provide more funds to local and state applicants for mitigation projects, and reduce disaster costs by reducing the risk of loss of lives and property.

Replacement of the sliding scale for "associated costs" in the public assistance program, with the more equitable "management costs," as defined in Section 201 will reduce the burden of determining these costs, and expedite the overall public assistance program at the state level. This will result in a more reasonable and understandable process for all parties and creates an incentive for progress to closure of disasters.

In Section 202, we appreciate the added incentive found in Subsection (3) which will encourage eligible applicants who want to undertake an alternate project that will mitigate future disaster damages. Allowing for ninety percent Federal contribution toward alternate infrastructure projects is an incentive for good decisions, and at the same time, reduces future costs by encouraging facility owners to move away from high risk areas.

Using the "estimate of eligible costs" will dramatically expedite the public assistance process and implement the concepts found in FEMA's Public Assistance streamlining initiative. However, we recommend that the spread between under/over estimating be tightened from the proposed 80 percent-120 percent, to one that is more equitable, i.e., 90 percent-110 percent. Knowing there will be multi-million dollar public assistance projects, underestimating the cost by 20 percent could be devastating to the applicant.

New Section 203 amends the Federal Assistance Programs available to individuals and households to create an expedited delivery system for human service needs of disaster victims. Although some current State responsibilities are shifted from the Governor to the President the process is "in consultation and coordination with the Governor" and should result in a more cost effective program overall. Existing flexibility in the emergency housing repair program should be maintained to give FEMA every tool needed to match family assistance with the needs resulting from a disaster.

We recommend consideration of additional flexibility in Individual Assistance Declarations. When a local jurisdiction is declared for Individual Assistance we would propose that the contiguous jurisdictions be included as eligible for disaster assistance. This would comport with the current regulations of the Small Business Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture in their agency declaration process. Such a measure would eliminate discrimination against those who happen to live on the other side of the river.

We applaud the provision found at Section 205 which formally recognizes the benefits of creating "management states" who have accepted more responsibility in managing the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Florida was the first state in the nation to be designated a Management State, and it has had a very positive impact, expediting the entire HMGP process and reducing associated costs. We would encourage those states with the capability and desire to take this role to do so.

Recognizing Congress' desire and need to streamline the public assistance program we appreciate the Committee's willingness to let FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) streamlining initiative have time to mature. NEMA believes the PA streamlining will prove itself with time, and should be given the chance to experience success. Already, in those states that have used this new system on a pilot basis (i.e., Kentucky), they report it works well and has great potential.

Lastly, I would like to recommend the Committee consider a review of Section 420 (fire suppression) of the current Stafford Act. Having gone through what the U.S. Forest Service is calling the most complex fire event in the history of the nation, I wholeheartedly recommend the Fire Suppression Grant process be reviewed. The current process of securing a fire suppression grant is stressful and the fiscal management is very difficult. The process of obtaining Federal assistance needs to be clarified. Further, FEMA should assume the leadership role in all disasters, including major fires. There needs to be one agency in charge in order to mitigate any confusion. We believe as more and more of our nations' population enter into the urban/wildland interface, we will see increasingly devastating forest fires directly impacting communities. As a nation, we must look beyond the traditional wind and water issues in preparing for disasters. We find the need to place more emphasis upon studying the overall issue of the urban/wildland interface, and the disastrous consequences of wild fire on these interfaces. We believe the consequences of urban interface fires can be mitigated. We also believe a fire suppression grant should generate funding for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, something it currently does not do.

In summary, NEMA and FEMA have labored very hard to encourage the creation of predisaster hazard mitigation programs and appropriate funding levels, as well as streamlining the public assistance process. This bill puts us on the right track, though we should constantly strive to refine the process. NEMA fully endorses the concept of reduction of future disaster costs through predisaster hazard mitigation programs. It is the only solution that will have meaningful impact on future disaster cost reductions. We support your efforts to institutionalize this concept.

NEMA and each of its member State Directors thanks you for this opportunity to speak to you today. We look forward to your continued efforts in this endeavor.

STATEMENT OF ALBERT ASHWOOD, DIRECTOR, OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for inviting the State of Oklahoma to present testimony before your subcommittee today. We commend you for your ongoing efforts to strengthen and enhance the nation's emergency management system and we look forward to providing any assistance to you for this endeavor. From our position, your subcommittee recognizes that the only way we will truly reduce disaster costs and the significant impacts of disasters on our communities is through mitigation, more specifically, predisaster mitigation.

Background

The focus of today's hearing is predisaster mitigation and the streamlining and cost reduction of the emergency management process. Since 1900, Oklahoma has experienced 17 federally declared disasters, which include 7 fire suppression declarations. Federal, State and local dollars that were used within the State for each of the three recovery programs—Individual Assistance, Infrastructure and Mitigation—during this period totals over \$80 million. However, an important point to consider here is that this figure represents only the assistance identified as a result of the requirements to track disaster expenditures. Insured losses; uninsured or under-insured losses; unreported labor and construction costs; and other miscellaneous costs would add even more dollars to that total. In addition, in 1994, Oklahoma enacted State Public Assistance (infrastructure) disaster declaration procedures. This legislation provides for public assistance to political subdivisions up to \$100,000 per calendar year, per jurisdiction, for nonfederally declared disasters that are declared by the Governor. For this State program, we have expended nearly \$3 million of State funds. Our program does not require a local match for these funds. However, in each instance the local damages far exceeded the amount that could be repaired or replaced with funds provided by the State. As you can see, disaster costs, and methods that can be implemented to reduce those costs are very important issues.

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 1998

We strongly concur with the intent of the bill as written. Each of us at the Federal, state, local and private level should do everything within our means to reduce the costs of disasters before they occur. Title I—Predisaster Hazard Mitigation—will assist in the endeavor. We encourage all of our communities to identify and assess their risks; implement measures to reduce disaster losses; and ensure that critical facilities, public infrastructure, and lifelines will continue to function after a disaster. At the same time we are encouraging communities to do this, we are also advocating that the continuance of Federal assistance might be in jeopardy unless respective communities start helping themselves first, before a disaster occurs. Please understand that we fully concur with a predisaster hazard mitigation program, but we are trying to convince the communities of their responsibilities relative to developing a unified effort through local partnerships, identifying non-Federal resources, and initiating a strong commitment to long-term mitigation projects that can be funded locally. In addition, these local initiatives should be identified in detail in the local all-hazards mitigation plan.

A review of Title I discloses that we may need clarification of the following items:

- Provides the opportunity to fund hazard mitigation measures that the State or local government determines to be necessary.

- Providing care to individuals is a paramount concern in any emergency situation. For example, we are currently experiencing drought conditions in Oklahoma, as are other states as well. We have convened the appropriate State Agency Directors, their Federal counterparts, volunteer agencies, and private sector businesses, to activate the Oklahoma State Drought Management Plan. This plan focuses on fire suppression, water shortages, heat related problems and agricultural losses. This is a proactive step to protect our Oklahoma citizens. The emergency management process as relates to Individual Assistance is a crucial link in providing food, shelter and life-sustaining services to each Oklahoman. We in Oklahoma learned a very valuable lesson April 19, 1995, and the Oklahoma disaster service community continues to provide essential services to many of those affected by the Murrah Building bombing. From this lesson, we know that early coordination is the key to sustaining a reasonable quality of life for those affected by disasters. We must remember that a disaster does not end when the immediate response is completed. For those affected families, the disaster has only begun.

We concur with state administration of the hazard mitigation assistance program. The wording of the draft bill enables each state to conduct an assessment of its abilities and capabilities to participate as a "managing state", along with the flexi-

bility to participate in the program when the time is right. As defined long-term, each state should strive to become a managing state; however, local capabilities impact on the final decision. We have already participated in some of this coordination, and it would appear to be a seamless process to become a "management state."

We concur in concept with the streamlining of damaged facilities program. Since the program is still under development, we hesitate to concur fully until we have had a chance to review the new program in its entirety. We have been asked from the start of this initiative to review and provide comments relative to development of the program, and it appears that the "new PA Program," currently under development by FEMA will reduce the administrative requirements of the current program, as well as be more responsive to all eligible applicants. Further, I am a member of the National Emergency Management Association Response and Recovery Committee. Be assured that this program is being evaluated thoroughly at that level also. Streamlining the process is long overdue, and we look forward to the new program.

Summary

We in Oklahoma share your concern about the rising costs of disasters. We encourage you to explore all opportunities to initiate cost-reducing measures such as predisaster hazard mitigation. Devolving more authority for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the Public Assistance Program will definitely reduce administrative costs, eliminate duplication and streamline the entire process. The ultimate benefactors will be disaster victims who will receive improved services. Initiatives that you have identified already about a study regarding cost reduction, a study regarding disaster insurance for public infrastructure, and a study regarding declarations will no doubt identify additional areas for consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

STATEMENT OF DAN SUMMERS, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, NEW HANOVER COUNTY, NC

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. It is indeed an honor to be with you today. I compliment you on the desire to learn more from local government regarding possible amendments to the Stafford Act.

I bring to this discussion 15 years service as one community's Emergency Manager having participated in four Presidential Disaster Declarations.

In North Carolina nearly all one hundred counties have experienced disasters in the past decade. The issue of disaster response is no longer the other communities problem. I can attest that most all local governments now have a greater appreciation for a sound emergency management response program. However it is my belief that while disaster response plans are improving, only a small number of communities are sensitive to the rising disaster cost and the potential for cost reduction under the concept of mitigation.

This Committee, along with some local governments and Federal agencies are equally concerned about the cost of disaster recovery. However, before you hasten to suggest budget cuts or tighter restrictions, understand that every disaster response is community specific. Needs vary, and individual pain and suffering is far greater than the typical 15 second sound bite seen on the evening news.

I have witnessed Federal participation in disasters in the 1980's and I have been a part of the Federal response effort during events of the 90's. Allow me to compliment FEMA and many of its Federal partners on dramatic improvements in customer service. While dramatic improvements have occurred and communities are better served, there still exists opportunities to reach new levels in disaster response and mitigation.

The efforts of FEMA's Project Impact is the new cornerstone of local recovery and mitigation initiatives. My community—New Hanover County North Carolina is one of the seven pilot communities involved in this worthwhile program. With FEMA's program support, we have a local community-driven task force. Our task force, titled the Partnership for Disaster Mitigation and Recovery has generated strong community interest. Let me illustrate some of our successes. In partnership with Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse, we have conducted Hurricane Preparedness Expos. This event allows hundreds of visitors and customers to learn more on topics ranging from simple preparedness reminders to the latest techniques in strengthening roof and wall systems.

Barnes and Nobles Bookseller contributed a full month of community service programming to hurricane awareness and single family home mitigation techniques.

Most notably has been the highly acclaimed sessions for children who have learned preparedness and drawn pictures of elevating their homes illustrating their understanding of disaster mitigation techniques.

Just one of our planned construction projects is a combined FEMA and local effort. Combining funding sources we are designing new school roof systems to not only reduce the cost of damages during the next hurricane, but improving the building's safety as an evacuation shelter. A key part of this activity will include training local engineers, building code officials and architects on the latest wind resistant techniques for incorporation into future school construction projects.

For the record, a summary of our community activity and work projects has been submitted.

The Partnership is continuing to work on dozens of ways to minimize the financial impact of our next hurricane event. Project Impact has allowed local communities to best define their needs as opposed to following a manual generalized for the entire country.

If you analyze the disaster recovery process, the majority of the response activity is a local effort. Assistance typically is needed during recovery and restoration. Restoration and recovery efforts, especially for infrastructure items such as public buildings, schools, roads, and basic housing, are extremely difficult to manage following any disaster for any level of government.

If a community takes steps to reduce the effects of future disasters especially areas experiencing repetitive events—it is simple to understand that the pressures for local government will be reduced. Surprisingly, most of our disaster outcomes are no longer unknowns. Mitigation dollars in partnership with local communities will be our roadmap to reduction in Federal disaster dollars.

One analogy of supporting funding for predisaster mitigation might correlate with the concept of a vaccine. If the government supports the cost of vaccinations' the cost to the community is reduced by not having to combat that particular disease. Furthermore, the education and awareness efforts associated with vaccination programs contributes to our overall community wellness and improved standard of living.

Project Impact and predisaster mitigation funding opportunities for communities can work much like a vaccine. If FEMA helps the community develop a team approach to building disaster resistant communities and injects funds for local demonstration mitigation projects, the community then has the opportunity to map its own mitigation successes.

Recently, one of our local elected officials put Project Impact in this perspective. Look at what our nation has accomplished supporting concepts of recycling and the use of seatbelts. In these programs we have invested in public education, research and demonstration grant funding. By supporting predisaster mitigation funding opportunities with closely aligned Federal and community partnerships, a national disaster mitigation ethic will begin to emerge. This ethic or change in the way we handle disasters is the best way we know to begin the process of reducing disaster cost.

In closing, I cannot begin to tell you the excitement and dedication my community has developed regarding Project Impact and the common sense approach to predisaster mitigation. My community, especially large and small businesses, feels that this is "government at its best" because the activities and programs are flexible and community-based. Be patient, we all know that new predisaster mitigation strategies will take time to conceive, develop and implement on a state and local level. Your pre-and post-disaster mitigation funding support will in-time begin to show some very tangible results.

I thank you for this opportunity, I hope that you will give strong consideration to opening the regulatory doors for FEMA, and allow a community-based disaster mitigation ethic to be born.

Thank you, and may I answer any questions you may have?

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Agreement is made this ninth day of December 1997, by these parties: the County of New Hanover, City of Wilmington, participating municipalities, the private sector, the State of North Carolina and its partners (referred to collectively as the "State"), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency and its national-level partners (referred to collectively as "FEMA").

Recitals

WHEREAS, the parties

Will strive to create a sustainable community that is resistant to the human and economic costs of disasters; and

Recognize increasing population growth and diversity, escalating disaster costs, increasing vulnerability, and increasing threats to voluntary insurance markets; and

Recognize that vulnerable conditions exist among State, County, City, and participating municipalities' public and private buildings and facilities and the utility and transportation systems that serve them; and

Recognize the need to improve communications among industry; government; and the community; and

Understand that the consequences of natural and man-made hazard events—losses of lives and property—are unacceptable; and

Understand the critical relationships among governments, nonprofit institutions, and the private sector; and

Believe that measures can be taken to reduce future losses; that enacting these measures can be done best in partnerships among government agencies, private companies, voluntary and professional associations, colleges and universities, and community organizations; and

Promote personal responsibility for disaster preparedness; Recognize the respective commitment of the parties to mitigation activities; and

Agree that incentives, such as financial, are necessary; and

Agree to continue to receive and encourage the input of other appropriate partners; and

Understand that the State, County, City, and municipalities agree to participate in FEMA's "Project Impact" initiative and National Mitigation Strategy; and

Understand that the State, County, City, and municipalities agree to participate in North Carolina's Mitigation Planning Initiative; and

Understand that the State, County, City, and participating municipalities agree to participate in the Federal Government's National Mitigation Strategy; and

Believe that loss-reduction efforts undertaken before the onset of natural or man-made hazards events are the foundation of emergency management and are in the interest of public safety and economic security; and

Desire to reduce losses because of their effect on the citizens of the United States and their cost to Federal, State, and local governments; and

Wish to engender a new attitude among communities that embraces policies and projects that avoid, to the extent possible, creating new risks due to natural or man-made hazards, and to lessen the risk associated with existing buildings, facilities, utilities, and transportation systems; and

WHEREAS, the parties believe they have a strong and abiding mutual interest to reduce losses from future disasters;

NOW, THEREFORE, it is mutually agreed that the parties voluntarily enter into this non-binding Agreement to establish the New Hanover County Partnership for Disaster Mitigation and Recovery (the Partnership). Membership in the partnership is open and can be expanded to include new (additional) partners in the future. The partnership will work together, and with other interested entities to further mutual loss-reduction goals subject to the terms and conditions recited below.

1. Term

The respective duties, responsibilities and commitments of the parties hereto Shall commence on the date this Agreement is signed by the parties and may be periodically renewed or revised at the option of the parties.

2. Consultations

The Partners, in coordination with other public-sector entities and related community-wide initiatives, shall consult with each other on:

- identification and delineation of natural or man-made hazards within the County, City, and participating municipalities;
- assessment of risk and vulnerability of buildings, facilities, utilities, communications and transportation systems in the public and private sectors;
- techniques to plan for, reduce, and manage expected losses; and
- technical and financial assistance and incentives to facilitate loss-reduction projects.

3. Annual Evaluation

The parties shall annually review the partnership created by this Agreement to determine and document the improvements accomplished. The Partnership will prepare an annual report describing accomplishments and making recommendations for improving this Agreement, FEMA's Project Impact, and other disaster mitigation/recovery strategies.

4. Resource Commitment

The parties will consider committing human, technical, and financial resources, coordinate with current and future partners, and carry out the fundamental actions of this voluntary, non-binding Agreement.

5. The Disaster-Resistant Communities (Project Impact) Action Plan

This Project Impact Agreement lists commitments made by the parties to be included as part of the Project Impact Action Plan. Appendix A reports these commitments, which will be acted upon after execution of this agreement. These actions will constitute steps toward accomplishing the loss-reduction goal. The period of time for completing defined actions will be set and reported by the partnership.

The principal objective of this initiative is to further develop private, volunteer, and public-sector capabilities people, policies, resources, long-term plans, schedule for accomplishments, and establishment of working relationships—needed to carry out projects to reduce vulnerability to risk and minimize losses.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each party has caused this Agreement to be executed by its duly authorized representatives on the date first mentioned above.

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED ACTIONS

Initial actions the partnership agreed to take include the formation of a local government-sanctioned, broadly representative Steering Committee to coordinate partnership activities and perform other functions.

Additional actions to be discussed are listed below by functional elements of the agreed-upon partnership organization. The partnership will refine this list and add timeframes for completion.

Steering Committee

- Develop standard operating procedures, in which protocols are established for mitigation and recovery efforts (what can be done, when).
- Ensure consistency among other community plans that facilitate efficient recovery and promote predisaster mitigation.
- Adapt the Emergency Operations Center to enable its use for private-sector and mitigation planning, and private-/public-sector involvement and coordination.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive mitigation plan and/or a business recovery/mitigation plan.
- Encourage the State to conduct a capabilities assessment.
- Establish a speakers' bureau that promotes mitigation, mitigation education, and the development of mitigation-related alliances among business, industry, the community, and the public sector.
- Develop a community-wide plan for obtaining and managing pre-designated emergency resources.
- Identify community-wide initiatives that are similar/relevant to Project Impact; seek to coordinate and facilitate activities that relate to Project Impact and the overall disaster-resistant community concept.
- Seek ways to incorporate the goals and objectives of Project Impact and the overall disaster-resistant community concept into the public-sector decisionmaking process.
- Develop a Project Impact marketing plan.
- Seek confirmation of commitment for a mentoring program.

Project Staff

- (An HMGP grant is being sought to enable hiring a project staff).
- Conduct a comprehensive capability assessment in New Hanover County (also see bullet 5 under "Steering Committee").
 - Identify and solicit participation in the Project Impact Partnership from entities that could benefit from participation or whose partnership is desirable for any other reason.
 - Survey key players to identify mitigation activities planned, underway, or to which the institution will commit.
 - Coordinate (with FEMA) a mitigation and recovery exercise for the community

Risk Assessment

- Conduct a residential/business risk/vulnerability assessment.
- Conduct an infrastructure risk/vulnerability assessment, e.g., water, sewer, power, infrastructure).
- Inventory the tools and resources available (e.g., engineering, architectural groups).

- Identify critical facilities and assess their vulnerability to disasters.
- Evaluate/assess storm water facilities.
- Conduct architectural evaluations for resistance to wind and water damage.
- Assess the vulnerability of a critical facility in the community (committed by FEMA).
- Assess vulnerabilities to environmentally sensitive areas/recovery efforts.
- Participate in Department of Transportation vulnerability assessment.
- Assess the Community Rating System's present and future impact on the subject area.
- > Implement FEMA's agreement to provide training for community teachers.
- > Disseminate information about the characteristics of disasters and warnings.
- > Increase general knowledge of recovery activities.
- > Educate the public about protective actions (e.g., beach closings).
- > Educate the public about evacuation decisionmaking.

Public Information

- Develop a long-term, ongoing, public education program in mitigation.
- > Define "mitigation" and ensure understanding.
- > Compile mitigation case studies, disseminate.
- > Include a component to educate school students.
- Develop and implement mitigation demonstration projects, mitigation marketing plan.
- Disseminate the emergency management plan more widely to users.
- Conduct a cooperative education program for business/government (in particular, to transmit information about governmental recovery actions).
- Pre-plan for local permitting

Mitigation Planning

- Develop an emergency workers support plan (for lodging, feeding, and providing other support services).
- Continue incorporating mitigation concepts and strategies into the partnership area's overall land-use planning and development strategies, policies and regulations (including, but not limited to, comprehensive plans, floodplain and environmental management efforts, zoning ordinances, economic development plans, public facilities/capital improvement plans, subdivision plans).
- Develop and implement a comprehensive mitigation plan.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive mitigation/awareness education program.
- Develop and implement a community-wide hazard risk/vulnerability assessment program.
- Coordinate the partnership's effort with related initiatives to develop an effective and efficient plan for linking organizations involved in mitigation and recovery.
- Implement (private-sector) plan to pre-designate staging areas and responsibility for essential goods.
- Develop and implement a mentoring program that would help businesses and industries create hazard mitigation and preparedness plans.
- Identify and pre-plan to ensure quick availability of local resources, emergency access, other response services after a disaster.
- Pre-arranged agreements with other jurisdictions.
- Add mitigation elements to land-use plans Relocate vulnerable public facilities.
- Pre-plan for delivery of health services.

Financial Management

- Identify incentives and support their use to expand mitigation efforts.
- Articulate the economic value of mitigating resources.

APPENDIX B

FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL RESOURCE COMMITMENTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Analyze vulnerability to the project area's transportation infrastructure.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

FEMA is committed to provide the following direct assistance to support implementation of the Memorandum of Agreement:

1. A grant of no less than \$400,000 to retrofit a critical community facility;

2. Field deployment of FEMA's mitigation recovery exercise workshop to New Hanover County;
3. Support, through training and technical assistance, the Partnership's mitigation education effort;
4. Funding to conduct an engineering evaluation and feasibility study for the retrofit of a community critical facility; and
5. Technical assistance on the HAZUS loss-estimation model to develop a baseline for the hazard identification and risk-assessment portion of the New Hanover County local mitigation strategy.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NOAA's Coastal Services Center will commit planning, technical, and/or training resources associated with conducting a hazard risk and vulnerability assessment in Project Impact. The New Hanover County/Wilmington Project Impact area will be one of NOAA's national pilot projects using the latest technologies to develop relevant hazards-related, local planning and mitigation decision-support tools.

State of North Carolina

- Provide funding of the County's \$200,000 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) DRC planning proposal.
- Provide teacher-training workshops on natural hazards—identification and mitigation—based on the grades K–6 & 7–12 Earthquake Curriculum.
- Present educational lectures to school children on natural hazards and the mitigation of those hazards (earthquake, hurricane, and flooding).
- Provide training to local building officials and inspectors on the seismic, wind and flooding provisions of the North Carolina State Building Code.
- Use NHC/W as a model community/county in the statewide mitigation planning initiative to demonstrate private/public partnerships.
- Provide \$25,000 funding match to money from the private sector for the establishment of a mitigation/recovery and policy/planning organization in the business community based on the Disaster Recovery Business AllianceSM (DRBA) concept.
- Provide technical assistance and expertise in the form of State EM personnel to support the DRBA initiative.
- Provide training on disaster recovery coordination through exercises of the Recovery Function on a community-wide basis.
- Provide training at the local level on HAZUS, the geographic information system (GIS) loss estimation software-planning tool.
- Provide technical assistance in the form of State EM personnel in training and conducting a building inventory update and mitigation analysis for HAZUS.
- Provide training to local building officials, inspectors, and firefighters on the procedures to conduct post-disaster safety evaluation of buildings for structural hazards.
- Provide technical expertise in the form of State EM personnel on the evaluation of public critical facilities for structural and non-structural seismic vulnerabilities.
- Provide technical expertise in the form of State EM personnel for conducting as well as training on the techniques used to evaluate schools and day care centers on nonstructural earthquake hazard identification and mitigation.

NEW HANOVER COUNTY/CITY OF WILMINGTON

New Hanover County

- The New Hanover County Board of Commissioners' established a resolution agreeing to complete and fulfill all the obligations necessary to fully develop and implement a disaster-resistant community concept and Project Impact (see Appendix C for resolution).
- New Hanover County will provide \$162,400 of in-kind services to support a community-wide hazard mitigation planning initiative. This effort will include the development of public-private partnerships that will seek to implement hazard mitigation and post-disaster redevelopment planning.
- New Hanover County will explore the potential of formally incorporating an overall hazard mitigation focus, as well as hazard mitigation elements, into their planning, development, and land-use policies, regulations, and strategies.
- New Hanover County will evaluate its current floodplain management programs and regulations with the objective of improving the county's standing in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS).
- The New Hanover County Departments of Engineering and Building Inspections will continue to emphasize the hazard mitigation elements of its policies and regulations. Additionally, these departments will seek ways in which to incorporate

additional mitigation elements into their engineering and inspection activities. These departments also will explore the idea of developing a summary of their present and future mitigation activities as they relate to building and development regulations, policies, and strategies.

- New Hanover County Department of Building Inspections will formally establish and develop its existing “Program for Kids” initiative, which emphasizes hazard mitigation and hazard preparedness to schoolchildren. This department also will assist the partnership with the development and implementation of a community-wide mitigation education program. Finally, the Department will assist the partnership with a community-wide hazard risk/vulnerability assessment.

- New Hanover County Department of Emergency Management:
 - > installed at its own expense an 800 MHz banded two-way radio communications network to mitigate against the breakdown of communications that frequently occurs when disaster strikes. Studies indicate that the inability to effectively communicate, especially between agencies, often compounds the disaster. The New Hanover 800 MHz network allows for better command and control and enables responders to communicate across jurisdictional and agency boundaries. This network capability was self-initiated and is managed by the county director of emergency management. This system, able to handle up to 200 different talk groups, provides an increased range of communication as well as allowing cross talk between various agencies.

- > instituted community outreach program of hazard awareness and information. This program involves manning information booths at public events, appearing at community industries and schools, and participating in local parades. New Hanover County was recognized for its efforts in this regard with the 1997 Lowes Public Education Award from the National Coordinating Council of Emergency Management (NCCEM).

- > conducts and supports local industry and public-sector disaster mitigation exercises and drills. Specifically, the county regularly participates in the training mandated by the Nuclear Regulatory Agency for power plants in the area, as well as in mass casualty drills required by the Federal Aviation Agency for the local airport authority. Studies show that such training is critical to the prevention of loss of life and property when disasters occur.

- > recruited, trained, and manages a cadre of some 15–20 emergency management volunteers under the auspices of the Director, Emergency Management, New Hanover County. The Response Emergency Management Organization (REMO) volunteers help support training exercises and drills, participate in county disaster awareness and information programs, staff the Emergency Operations Center when called upon, and generally support emergency management efforts in the county. REMO contributed in excess of 2,000 man-hours annually, saving the county some \$40,000 per year in salary and personnel overhead for a full-time employee.

City of Wilmington

- Wilmington's City Council developed a resolution agreeing to complete and fulfill all the obligations necessary to fully develop and implement a disaster-resistant community concept and Project Impact (see Appendix C for resolution).

- The City of Wilmington will evaluate current floodplain management programs with the objective of qualifying the City for the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System.

- The City of Wilmington will continue to evaluate stormwater management strategies that focus on controlling stormwater runoff, sediment control, and water quality, as well as overall flood/hazard mitigation.

- The City of Wilmington will continue promoting the hazard mitigation focus that exists throughout the City's planning and land-use regulations, policies, and strategies. The City also will consider hazard mitigation during any evaluation, amendment, and updating phases of these programs. Additionally, the City's comprehensive planning update exercises will consider hazard mitigation ideals, concepts, and strategies.

- The City of Wilmington will continue to evaluate hazard mitigation concepts when constructing/upgrading public facilities (public buildings, water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants, etc).

- The Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce will support the elected officials and professional staffs of the County and the City as they complete and fulfill all of the obligations necessary to develop and implement the disaster-resistant community concept and Project Impact (see Appendix C).

Business & Industry—New Hanover County/City of Wilmington

- General Electric (GE). During the emergencies created by hurricanes Bertha and Fran, GE provided its employees and their families with various programs to help them cope with these disasters, including mitigation training, emergency grants for losses not covered by insurance, and the Employee Assistance Program. In addition, GE supported a volunteer employee program that assisted members of the community in making repairs after the hurricanes. GE presently participates in several community and local business/industry programs in support of local emergency planning initiatives. GE is committed to participate in the Project Impact Partnership, and will work with the partnership in the development of its community programs.

- WGNI Radio plays an instrumental role as a communications clearinghouse for the New Hanover County/Wilmington area before, during, and after a disaster. The station has displayed its continued commitment to this public service by purchasing a generator that will allow the station to operate at full capacity under extreme conditions. In addition to continuing to provide communications, the station will help the Partnership develop a hazard mitigation/awareness education program.

- After Hurricane Fran, Motorola and Coastal Electronics provided the New Hanover Division of Emergency Management with personnel and over \$500,000 in communication equipment and electronics, allowing the Division to efficiently operate after the storm. Motorola's Installation Audit Standards (R56) considers mitigation and hazard vulnerability factors during a system's installation. Additionally, Motorola's customer capability assessment keeps an inventory of each customer's equipment and needs. Both Motorola and Coastal Electronics will explore the possibility of sharing their "Installation" and "Capability Assessment (R56)" programs with the partnership. Additionally, both companies will consider becoming involved in the Partnership's effort to develop a community-wide hazard risk/vulnerability assessment.

- Carolina Power and Light's (CP&L) employee assistance program helps employees and their families so the employees can get back to their jobs faster. This program provides a benefit to the company, its employees, CP&L customers, and the community. CP&L also developed a Regional Storm Plan, which is reviewed during annual training sessions. Additionally, CP&L performs regular and ongoing surveys of its region to identify and mitigate potential problems (weak trees, trees and limbs too close to lines, etc). Also, CP&L's "New Roots" program helps the community replace fallen trees with low growing varieties that will not fall on power lines, causing outages and other dangerous conditions. In addition to these initiatives, CP&L inserts damage prevention and hazard preparedness materials in their billing statements. With its strong focus on hurricane preparedness, preparation, and mitigation, CP&L likely will assist the partnership in its efforts to develop a hazard awareness/mitigation education program. Additionally, CP&L will explore the idea of helping the partnership perform a community-wide hazard vulnerability/risk assessment.

- The North Carolina State Ports Authority has developed an effective Hurricane Preparedness Plan which is reviewed and updated regularly. This plan is implemented prior to a disaster so that the facility is completely shut down and hurricane resistant 48 hours prior to a storm's landfall. This plan also includes community assistance components that help the surrounding area with recovery efforts. The Ports Authority will consider sharing their plan with the community and will explore the possibility of becoming involved with the Partnership's development and implementation of a hazard mitigation/awareness education program. Additionally, the Authority likely will share their community assistance experience with the partnership and advise the partnership during the development of a comprehensive community assistance program.

- Occidental Chemical Corporation has an employee assistance program in place that allows employees stay home to assist their families and others without impacting pay. Additionally, Occidental's severe weather shut down procedures provides for the safety and comfort of employees who volunteer to stay at the facility during a hurricane. Occidental also has established a "Safety Saturday" for employees, which, in addition to focusing on safety issues, covers hurricane preparation and mitigation topics. The company will consider participating in the development and implementation of a community-wide disaster/hurricane awareness week. Also, the company will consider assisting the partnership during the development and implementation of a community-wide mitigation awareness/education program.

- Hoechst Celanese has developed and implemented a hurricane preparedness plan that is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. Hoechst Celanese has tentatively agreed to assist the partnership with the development an implementation of a hazard mitigation/awareness education program. The company also has

agreed to consider assisting the partnership with their efforts to develop and implement a hazard risk/vulnerability assessment program. Finally, the company likely will help other area businesses and industries develop hurricane preparedness and mitigation plans.

- Lowes Stores has developed and instituted a Hurricane Preparedness/Awareness Exposition, an annual event that is held prior to hurricane season. This exposition (partially funded by the Lowes Home safety council) features displays and information that focus on hazard preparedness and mitigation issues. In addition to agreeing to continue hosting this annual event, Lowes will likely help the Partnership develop and implement a hazard mitigation/awareness education program. Additionally, Lowes will consider assisting helping the partnership during the development and implementation of a community hazard risk/vulnerability assessment.

APPENDIX C

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

COMMITMENTS TO FUTURE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

Mitigation, Land Use Planning, and Development

The following local government entities will strive to continue incorporating mitigation concepts and strategies into their overall land-use planning and development strategies, policies and regulations (including, but not limited to, comprehensive plans, floodplain and environmental management efforts, zoning ordinances, economic development plans, public facilities/capital improvement plans, subdivision plans):

NEW HANOVER COUNTY

CITY OF WILMINGTON

Hazard Mitigation and Awareness Education

The following entities will seek to develop and implement a comprehensive hazard mitigation/awareness education program for the New Hanover/Wilmington area:

Barnes and Noble
 Bell-South
 Carolina Power and Light
 City of Wilmington
 Coastal Electronics
 General Electric
 The Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
 Hoechst Celanese
 Lowes Stores
 Motorola
 National Coordinating Council of Emergency Management
 New Hanover County Division of Emergency Management
 North Carolina State Ports Authority
 Occidental Chemical Corporation
 WGNi Radio
 Wilmington Industrial Development, Inc.

Hazard Risk/Vulnerability Assessment

The following entities will consider assisting the Partnership with the development and implementation of a comprehensive hazard risk/vulnerability assessment for the New Hanover/Wilmington Area:

Barnes and Noble
 Bell-South
 Carolina Power and Light
 City of Wilmington
 Coastal Electronics
 General Electric
 The Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
 Hoechst Celanese
 Lowes Stores
 Motorola
 North Carolina State Ports Authority
 Occidental Chemical Corporation
 WGNi Radio

Wilmington Industrial Development, Inc.

Mentoring Program

The following entities will seek to help the partnership develop and implement a "mentoring" program that will be designed to help area businesses and industries create their own hazard mitigation and preparedness plans:

Bell-South
 Carolina Power and Light
 Coastal Electronics
 General Electric
 The Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
 Hoechst Celanese
 Motorola
 North Carolina State Ports Authority
 Occidental Chemical Corporation
 Wilmington Industrial Development, Inc.

APPENDIX D

SUPPORTING RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution of the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners, adopted September 2, 1997
2. Resolution of the City Council of Wilmington, North Carolina, adopted September 2, 1997
3. Resolution of the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, adopted September 2, 1997

RESOLUTION

REQUESTING FEMA DESIGNATE

NEW HANOVER COUNTY AND THE CITY OF WILMINGTON AS A DISASTER-RESISTANT COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, New Hanover County, the City of Wilmington and the other municipalities of New Hanover County are prone to Atlantic Coast Hurricanes, and

WHEREAS, New Hanover County and the municipalities therein received substantial damage from the Hurricanes named Bertha and Fran in the summer of 1996, and

WHEREAS, our communities, have recovered from the storms and were successful examples of teamwork and preparation, and

WHEREAS, New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington are under consideration for receipt of resources, grant funding and support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for designation as a Disaster-Resistant Community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests FEMA Director James Lee Witt to declare New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington as a Disaster-Resistant Community and that associated resources, support, and funding be forthcoming from the research, development, and education of the community to fully warrant the declaration and title of Disaster-Resistant Community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the elected officials and professional staffs of the County of New Hanover and the City of Wilmington be dedicated to completing and fulfilling all of the obligations necessary to fully develop and implement the Disaster-resistant community concept. On behalf of the citizens of New Hanover County and the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners, I, Robert G. Greer, am hereby authorized by the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners to submit this resolution to James Lee Witt, Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Adopted this second day of September 1997.

ROBERT G. GREER, *Chairman,*
Board of Commissioners, New Hanover County.

RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR FEMA DESIGNATION OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON AND
NEW HANOVER COUNTY AS A DISASTER-RESISTANT COMMUNITY

Legislative Intent

Wilmington and New Hanover County, located on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, have experienced in the past and are susceptible in the future to hurricanes and other natural disasters. Various public and private efforts have been considered and, to some extent, implemented to better prepare for the hazards of hurricanes.

Currently, the City and County are being considered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for designation and receipt of grant funding and support to become a pilot disaster-resistant community. This initiative is an opportunity to improve and expand the existing public/private partnerships, to develop predisaster mitigation strategies, and to educate our community on pre-hazard preparation.

The State's Division of Emergency Management is in full support of this effort and its officials have participated in recent conference calls and meetings with FEMA, City, County and private sector representatives.

Resolved

That the Wilmington City Council does hereby endorse and request the designation by FEMA Director James Lee Witt of the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County as a disaster-resistant community, with the associated resources, funding and support to be provided for the research, development, and implementation of strategies to mitigate the hazards of hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Adopted at a regular meeting on September 2, 1997

DON BETZ, *Mayor*.

GREATER WILMINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

RESOLUTION

REQUESTING FEMA DESIGNATE NEW HANOVER COUNTY AND THE CITY OF WILMINGTON
AS A DISASTER-RESISTANT COMMUNITY

WHEREAS, New Hanover County, The City of Wilmington and the other municipalities of New Hanover County are prone to Atlantic Coast Hurricanes, and

WHEREAS, New Hanover County and the municipalities therein received substantial damage from the Hurricanes named Bertha and Fran in the summer of 1996, and

WHEREAS, our communities, have recovered from the storms and were successful examples of teamwork and preparation, and

WHEREAS, New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington are under consideration for receipt of resources, grant funding and support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for designation as a disaster-resistant community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests FEMA Director James Lee Witt declare New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington as a disaster-resistant community and that associated resources, support and funding be forthcoming from the research, development and education of the community to fully warrant the declaration and title of disaster-resistant community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chamber will support the elected officials and professional staffs of the County of New Hanover and the City of Wilmington as they complete and fulfill all of the obligations necessary to fully develop and implement the disaster-resistant community concept. On behalf of the members of the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, I, Thomas L. Dodson, am hereby authorized by the Board of Directors of the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce to submit this resolution to James Lee Witt, Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Adopted this second day of September 1997.

THOMAS L. DODSON, *Chairman*,
CONNIE MAJURE, *President*.

NEW HANOVER COUNTY

PARTNERSHIP FOR DISASTER MITIGATION & RECOVERY (PROJECT IMPACT)

ACTIVITY REPORT

Projects/Events Underway

New Hanover County/Wilmington Project Impact "Public Attitudes & Preparedness Study": This is a comprehensive effort to inventory local residents' hurricane related perceptions and predisaster mitigation behavior. A random sample of community residents will be interviewed over the telephone about their experience with past hurricanes, their preparations for future hurricanes and a wide variety of other hurricane related perceptions. The Study objectives are to: (1) assess local residents' level of experience with past hurricanes; (2) measure perceptions toward the threat of possible hurricanes; (3) identify predisaster mitigation strategies being used by local residents; (4) establish knowledge of Project Impact activities; and (5) examine the links between the threat of hurricanes, preparation and mitigation behavior. The study will be conducted by the Survey Research Laboratory at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. The project results will be made available to the public in the form of an Executive Summary presented to the New Hanover County Department of Emergency Management on October 15, 1998.

School Retrofit Project: School representatives and Emergency Management officials interviewed several engineering consulting firms for technical services in evaluating New Hanover County Schools and additional shelters. They are in the process of reviewing proposal, and anticipate that an engineering consultant will be contracted in August. The project will be looking at designing new school roof systems to not only reduce the cost of damages during the next hurricane, but improve building safety as an evacuation shelter. Two key parts of this activity will include school building evaluations, and training local engineers, building code officials and architects on the latest wind resistant techniques for incorporation into future school construction projects.

New Hanover County "Storm Surge Inundation Map": A map is under construction with public/private partner contributors. Estimated completion date is September 1998. This map will be distributed free to the public. The theme is "Know Your Risk".

Risk & Vulnerability Assessment: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center (CSC) is partnering with FEMA in Wilmington/New Hanover County as a Project Impact initiative. CSC is working closely with New Hanover County and State agency staffs in the development of a risk and vulnerability assessment for the county to support the Project Impact initiative. The project team is utilizing geographic information system (GIS) and other spatial data technologies to conduct a thorough analysis of natural hazard risk and vulnerability in the county, focusing on the barrier islands and near shore areas. In collaboration with New Hanover County Emergency Management, GIS, and Planning staffs, CSC is developing a GIS application based on data maintained within the county's mapping system for use in planning prior to coastal hazard events or to assist in post-storm damage assessment. CSC is also supporting the Project Impact initiative through a cooperative agreement grant to the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (NC DCM).

Sewer Manhole Inflow Guard Project: The County has approximately 5,000 manholes in its sewer system. Some of these manholes (approximately 1,000) are located in the roads, while most (approximately 4,000) are along road shoulders or other low lying areas of the County. This project is installing stainless steel sewer guards (these would hold up under traffic vibrations better than plastic) in the manholes located in the roads and plastic sewer guards in all other manholes to prevent flood waters and stormwater runoff from entering the manholes around the covers, thus preventing sewer spills caused by excessive inflow.

Raising Elevation of Electrical Pump Equipment: In order to prevent environmental and equipment damage from occurring in future flood events, the county is raising the elevation of electrical equipment at three sewer pump stations. These three pump stations suffered from sewer damage from flooding problems during recent storms.

New Hanover County will be sending 12 representatives to the Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland for the IEMC: Hurricane Recovery & Mitigation Course in August 1998.

County Plans: New Hanover County Emergency Operations Plan is in the process of being updated, and the County "Hazard Mitigation and Recovery Plan" is under construction.

New Hanover County Emergency Management Web Page under construction.

The Senior Center is in the process of developing an Aging Data base for the purpose of seniors checking on and assisting other seniors when an emergency event notification is made.

City of Wilmington is in the process of constructing a "new" disaster resistant building for the City Fire Headquarters and the City Emergency Operations Center.

City of Wilmington is in the process of upgrading City sewer service for low income areas.

City of Wilmington to implement 800 mhz radio communications system (Fire in May 1998, and Police in August 1998.)

July 1998 Activities

New Hanover County developed a Emergency Checklist "Mini Plan". This checklist mini-plan is designed to be a supplement to the Emergency Operations Plan for easy access and reference information.

Steering Committees are scheduled to begin meeting this month to establish mitigation strategies and goals:

July 14— First meeting of the Mitigation Planning Steering Committee

July 15—First meeting of the Risk Assessment/Hazard Identification Steering Committee

July 21—First meeting of the Public Information/Human Services Steering Committee

July 30—First meeting of the Financial & Economic Issues Steering Committee

Disaster preparedness and hurricane awareness and education programs continue throughout the county.

June 1998 Activities

Partnership Committee for Disaster Mitigation and Recovery: At the June 18 meeting, the Partnership Committee introduced an organizational structure with four Steering Committees. The Steering Committees will begin meeting on a monthly basis in July to establish mitigation strategies, planning process and goals. The Four Steering Committees are:

Mitigation Planning Steering Committee

Risk Assessment/Hazard Identification Steering Committee

Public Information/Human Services Steering Committee

Financial & Economic Issues Steering Committee

(These "working groups" will report to the Partnership Committee at each quarterly meeting. They will report on all their activities, progress and projects.)

Enhanced Community Hurricane Preparedness & Education utilizing large and small business/industry, and the media. Supplied many employers with material for distribution to their employees on disaster preparedness.

Mark Sudduth, Hurricane Maps Enterprises, has produced a new 1998 full-color Hurricane Awareness Tracking Map. As a result of the Project Impact initiative, the map has been expanded this year to include additional information and mitigation topics such as: hurricane basics/preparedness, tools of trade, tides/moon phases, evacuation, food & water, mitigation (Project Impact), sand dunes, NFIP, elevating/moving home, hurricane shutters, tree damage, etc. The maps were available in the beginning of June at various locations including: Harris Teeter, Lowe's and S&E Food Marts. The maps were also distributed at various hurricane awareness events, to all employees of sponsors and by the local Emergency Management Department. Media promotion of these maps were provided by the following radio stations: WAAV, Star 105.5, Q92, Kiss 94.1 and WWQQ 101.3. Map sponsors are the following: Hale Construction, M&N Equipment Rental, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, CP&L, BellSouth, Springer Eubank Oil Company, Harris Teeter, Gregory Poole, Lowe's of Wilmington, Edwards Crane Company, Home Base Rollaway, State Ports of Wilmington, NC Bar Association, Coastal Electronics, James Moore Insurance Agency and Corps of Engineers.

Lowe's Hurricane Preparedness Expo, Saturday, June 6. There were static displays as well as hands-on demonstrations and displays. WECT, Channel 6, was the media sponsor for this event. Participants included local Emergency Management, FEMA, NOAA, American Red Cross and about 40 other vendors. Seminars and displays included the following: how to build and install hurricane shutters; generator operation and safety; emergency food preparation and safety; survival kit preparation; preparing a family disaster plan; post-storm accident prevention; county disaster assistance vehicles & equipment; county storm surge probability maps; evacuation route & hurricane shelter information; survival kit supplies; generators; hurricane shutters; home safety products; and hurricane forecasting & tracking. Services that were provided are: plywood for hurricane shutters cut to order free, and free

chain saw blade sharpening. Lowe's of Wilmington has an on-going disaster preparedness display in the front of their store.

Barnes & Noble—"Hurricane Preparedness" month at the store. The following events were held:

June 4—from 7 am to 9 pm.—*Weather—Be Prepared on Land & Sea*. Guests: David Thomas, FEMA—Region IV; Lt. Tony Varamo, USCG; Thomas Shaw, USCG; Tom Matheson, NWS; Mark Sudduth, Hurricane Map Designer; and weather personalities from WECT & WWAY. New hurricane tracking maps will be available. Learn from the experts—how to be safe on land & sea.

June 11—from 7 am to 9 pm.—*Protect Your Home & Garden*. The guests included: Captain Charles Calhoun: The Hurricanes Are Coming—how to retro fit your home; Mark Markley, Construction Consultant & Radio Home Improvement Talk-Show Host; Jane Hardwick, Owner of Wilmington Awning—hurricane shutters; Brian Edgar, Store Manager of Home Depot—chainsaw and generator safety; Mary Anne Medcalf, Urban Forrester from the New Hanover County Arboretum; and Durant Vick, President of Crisis Management Worldwide—insurance.

June 18—from 7 am to 9 pm.—*Staying Healthy*. Experts discussed things to be done to protect your family's health and your pet's safety before and after a hurricane. Guest speakers include: Ida Burgin, New Hanover Home Extension—food & safety preparation; Annie Pixley, Cape Fear Chapter American Red Cross—training courses in disaster preparedness; Ben Brow, Special Needs; Donna Booth-Neal, Animal Advisory Control Board—pet safety & preparedness; and Dan Summers, New Hanover County Emergency Management Director—hurricane preparedness and recovery.

June 25—from 7 am to 9 pm.—*NC Hurricane History*. NC Hurricane History has been revised to include Hurricane Bertha and Hurricane Fran. Jay Barnes, the Author, was present to discuss our past hurricane history and give some insights into the future.

Saturday Storytimes (at 11 a.m.)

June 6—David Wiesner read hurricane related stories to children at Lowe's Day.

June 13—Special storytime—Hurricane City (Project Impact and why it is important.)

June 20—Stormy Weather by Molly Wigand.

June 27—Twisters by Lucille Penner.

The first New Hanover County Joint Information Media Center Exercise was held on June 16. This was an actual hurricane drill using participants to call in as citizens with support and information needs. There were eighty six (86) participants, and in 6 hours the Media Center put out sixty three (63) press releases to correct misinformation and rumor control, to be given to the public has been computerized by the County's Information Technology Department for quick and accurate information dissemination. The exercise critique showed positive overall support for the project and system, with only minor adjustments and system corrections to be made.

Media Presentations on hurricane awareness and safety tips. A week-long series was prepared and aired by Channel 3 TV. This series included hurricane preparedness, retrofitting your home, generator safety, family disaster preparedness planning and Project Impact. Channel 6 has also aired several hurricane awareness segments relating to family disaster preparedness planning and Project Impact. Several local radio stations have been regularly airing hurricane preparedness tips. Channel 6 is the media sponsor for the Lowe's Hurricane Expo on June 6.

The Town of Carolina Beach has completed a final draft of their "Hazard Mitigation Plan".

New Hanover County Emergency Management Director Dan Summers addressed Congressional Staff on Capitol Hill on June 3 regarding New Hanover County's experiences as a Project Impact community, and future expectations as the County moves forward with becoming more disaster resistant.

A State Hurricane/Informational Exercise was held on June 2. The first part describe how the state Logistical Operation Support Areas (LOSA) will be set-up and the process before, during & after an event. The second part consisted of a tabletop exercise focusing on pre-landfall activities as they relate to dissemination of information, protective action decisionmaking, and LOSA's.

May 1998 Activities

Occidental Chemical Corporation held "Safety Saturday" on Saturday, May 30 at the plant site off Holly Shelter Road in Castle Hayne. Participants included: Lowe's, Honest Injun, Castle Hayne Fire Department, New Hanover County Emergency Management, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, New Hanover County Sheriffs Department, Cape Fear River Watch, FEMA, Carolina Power & Light, American Red

Cross, and NC Forestry Service. There were hands-on displays, safety presentations and the Fire Department's "Smokehouse" was on display for children's fire safety tours.

New Hanover County Emergency Management held a Hurricane Table Top Exercise for the Town of Carolina Beach, in the Emergency Operations Center on May 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The MACC—"Multi-Agency Communications Coordination" Vehicle has been established to enhance communications in the County. This vehicle is assigned to the Department of Emergency Management.

Wilmington Regional Association of Realtors, Inc.—hosted a seminar "Insuring Against Natural Disasters in Coastal North Carolina—Nuts & Bolts for Realtors". The program was held on Wednesday, May 13 at UNC-Wilmington's University Center. The program included: History & Background of the National Flood Insurance Program (Roger G. Widdifield, Regional Manager NFIP); Where You Live Matters—A City/County Overview (Dexter Hayes, NHC Planning Director); Review of Flood Insurance Policy Coverages (Roger G. Widdifield, Regional Manager NFIP); Insuring Coastal Properties (Dascheil Propes, Chief Deputy Commissioner of Insurance-NCDOI); Mortgage Lender Responsibility & Notification Procedures (Lena Thompson, Federal Insurance Administration); Status of Disaster Insurance in NC (Dascheil Propes, NCDOI); and the Status of Federal Natural Disaster Insurance (Mary Ellen Stevens, Constituent Service Representative, The Office of the Honorable Mike McIntyre/U.S. House of Representatives). This program was well attended, and apparently the first of its kind in the nation.

BellSouth's Business Continuity Services for Disaster Planning, Wednesday, May 13 at the Wilmington Hilton. BellSouth hosted this meeting for its largest business customers regarding Disaster Planning. One of the agenda items included Dan Summers, Director of New Hanover County Emergency Management regarding hurricane preparedness and Project Impact. BellSouth hosted this seminar so their customers will start thinking about developing their own business continuity plan as a preventive measure in case of an emergency, not just reacting after a disaster. Joining the seminar was one of BellSouth's largest vendors of disaster recovery solutions—ComDisco. This type of meeting will be held in nine (9) other Bell South States.

The New Hanover County Department of Emergency Management hosted a Public Officials Conference at the Town of Carolina Beach on May 11.

The Wilmington-New Hanover County Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee met on Saturday, May 2. The Comprehensive Plan also includes the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) Land Use Plan Update and important input into the Wilmington Urban Area Transportation Plan Update. The Steering Committee & the Subcommittee will meet monthly. A Joint Work Session will be held in early September, and a draft Plan will be submitted to the State for initial review around September 30. Public Hearings on the Comprehensive Plan (& CAMA Land Use Plan Update) will be in early 1999. County Contact is Patrick Lowe at 341-7165 & the City Contact is Mark Zeigler at 341-5811.

The City of Wilmington made improvements to its Sweeney Water Plant, including 100 percent operational by generator.

The "new" Storm Water Plan for the City of Wilmington was approved.

The City of Wilmington installed generators in many City facilities and the fire stations.

April 1998 Activities

Project Impact Kickoff Meeting: First meeting of the Partnership Committee for Disaster Mitigation and Recovery (Project Impact) was held on April 29 at the Cape Fear Museum in Wilmington.

New Hanover County Emergency Management installed and tested NOAA Weather Radios in all County Schools.

New Hanover County Fire Station #5 had its Open House on April 29. Hoechst Celanese donated the building and land for this County Fire Station. This fire department is a combination of paid full-time, paid part-time and volunteers. An award was given to Hoechst Celanese at this Open House for their corporate contribution in this public & private partnership.

National Hurricane Conference: At the National Hurricane Conference in Norfolk, Virginia on April 8, Allen O'Neal, County Manager gave a presentation on local hurricane mitigation and the view from a disaster resistant community.

March 1998 Activities

IC-3 Drill (Special Needs Task Force Drill—March 9): In early 1998, a Task Force made up of public and private sectors was developed to discuss special needs and

the rising number of retired persons moving to this area. The Task Force was developed with 22 participating agencies forming an alliance to take special need individuals from high risk areas to an area where their needs can be continued. A separate EOC has been established called the IC-3 (Individual Care Coordination Center) which is located in the Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Agencies have agreed to staff the IC-3 in emergencies, and a successful table top was held with these agencies in the IC-3 on March 9. A draft Plan has been developed with triage actions for special needs individuals. The Task Force is still reviewing liability issues and working with nursing and rest homes to provide temporary housing. The Task Force will have a critique of this table top exercise in May.

"Spring Break 98" was held on March 28. Spring Break is part of Project Impact, a national effort that shifts the focus of emergency management from responding to disasters to initiating action to reduce potential losses prior to disasters. The volunteers for Spring Break assisted elderly, low income and special needs persons with debris removal, check and repair of safety/security devices, and installation of smoke detectors. Over 250 volunteers turned out and assisted 110 families in New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington. Over 60 smoke detectors were installed, more than 60 batteries were installed in existing smoke detectors, over 30 exterior light bulbs were installed, a wheel chair ramp was painted, a deck was built for a ramp, and over 50 yards were cleared of debris. Disaster preparedness information was also distributed to all of these families. This was a collaborative effort among the County, City, FEMA, the Corporation for National Service and students from UNC at Wilmington.

February 1998 Activities

FEMA Pilot Classes: Two FEMA pilot classes were held in the community. One of the classes was "When Your Job Is A Disaster", which deals with forming partnerships, communication, following-up, dealing with emotional people, and taking care of yourself. The second class is "Managing After A Disaster", which deals with similar topics as the previous course and allows students to work on strategies. These course were well received by the community and are available through FEMA.

KEYS TO HURRICANE SURVIVAL

This material is provided as a public service. Its purpose is to increase hurricane awareness. The key to survival is advance preparation.

BEFORE A HURRICANE THREATENS

Elevation of Your Home Above Sea Level

Get this information from local Emergency Management officials. Your nearest Weather Service office can supply flood-stage data for area streams and waterways. Find out if your home is subject to storm surge (tidal) flooding.

Maximum Storm Surge Which Might Occur

Information about the potential for inland flooding and storm surge is available through your local Emergency Management Office.

Route to Safety If You Have to Leave

Plan your escape route early. Check with Emergency Management for low points and flooding history of your route.

Check the number of hours it could take you to evacuate to a safe area during peak evacuation traffic.

Location of Nearest Official Shelter

Emergency Management can give you the location of the shelter nearest your home and explain what you should bring with you.

Plan for your family's safety. Know how to contact family members should the need arise.

How Safe is Your Home?

Near the seashore, plan to relocate during a hurricane emergency. If you live in a mobile home, always plan to relocate.

The Inventory of Your Property A complete inventory of personal property will help in obtaining insurance settlements and/or tax deductions for losses. Inventory checklists can be obtained from your insurance representative.

Don't trust your memory. List descriptions and take pictures. Store these and other important insurance papers in waterproof containers or in your safety deposit box.

What Your Insurance Will Cover

Review your insurance policies and your coverage to avoid misunderstanding later. Take advantage of flood insurance. Separate policies are needed for protection against wind and flood damage, which people frequently don't realize until too late.

WHEN A WATCH IS ISSUED

Monitor storm reports on radio and television.

If considering moving to a shelter, make arrangements for all pets. Pets are not allowed in shelters.

Refill needed prescriptions.

If evacuation has not already been recommended, consider leaving the area early to avoid long hours on limited evacuation routes.

CHECK SUPPLIES

Transistor Radio With Fresh Batteries

Radio will be your most useful information source. Have enough batteries to last several days. There may be no electricity.

Flashlights, Candles or Lamps, Matches

Store matches in waterproof container. Have lantern fuel for several days. Know how to use safely.

Full Tank of Gasoline

Never let your vehicle gas tank be less than half-full during hurricane season; fill up as soon as a hurricane watch is posted. Remember: when there is no electricity, gas pumps won't work.

Canned Goods and NonPerishable Foods

Store packaged foods which can be prepared without cooking and need no refrigeration. There may be no electricity or gas.

Containers for Drinking Water

Have clean, air-tight containers to store sufficient drinking water for several days. The local water supply could be interrupted or contaminated.

Materials for Protecting Glass Openings

Have shutters or lumber for protecting large windows and doors and masking tape for use on small windows.

Materials for Emergency Repairs

Your insurance policy may cover the cost of materials used in temporary repairs, so keep all receipts. These will also be helpful for any income tax deductions.

WHEN A WARNING IS ISSUED

Listen Constantly to Radio or TV

Keep a log of hurricane position, intensity and expected landfall. Discount rumors. Use telephone sparingly.

If You Live in a Mobile Home

Check tie-downs and leave immediately for a safer place. Mobile homes are not safe in hurricane force winds.

Prepare for High Winds

Brace your garage door. Lower antennas. Be prepared to make repairs.

Anchor Objects Outside

Garbage cans, awnings, loose garden tools, toys and other loose objects can be deadly missiles. Anchor securely or bring indoors.

Protect Windows and Other Glass

Board up or shutter large windows securely. Tape exposed glass to reduce shattering. Draw drapes across windows and doors to protect against flying glass if shattering does occur.

Move Boats on Trailers Close to House

Fill boats with water to weigh them down. Lash securely to trailer and use tie-downs to anchor trailer to the ground or house.

*Check Mooring Lines of Boats in Water, Then Leave Them**Store Valuable and Personal Papers*

Put irreplaceable documents in waterproof containers and store in highest possible spot. If you evacuate be sure to take them with you.

Prepare for Storm Surge, Tornadoes and Floods

Storm surge, tornadoes and flash floods are the worst killers associated with a hurricane. In a tornado warning, seek inside shelter below ground level. If outside, move away at right angles from tornado; if escape is impossible, lie flat in a ditch or low spot. The surge of ocean water plus flash flooding of streams and rivers due to torrential rains combine to make drowning the greatest cause of hurricane deaths.

Check Your Survival Supplies Once Again.

IF YOU STAY AT HOME

Stay Indoors

In an inside room away from doors and windows. Don't go out in the brief calm during passage of the eye of the storm. The lull sometimes ends suddenly as winds return from the opposite direction. Winds can increase in seconds to 75 mph or more.

Protect Property

Without taking any unnecessary risks, protect your property from damage. Temporary repairs can reduce your losses.

Stay Away From Windows and Glass Doors

Move furniture away from exposed doors and windows.

Keep a Continuous Communications Watch

Keep radio or television tuned for information from official sources. Unexpected changes can sometimes call for last minute relocations.

Remain Calm

Your ability to meet emergencies will help others.

IF YOU MUST EVACUATE

Know Where You Are Going . . . Leave Early, In Daylight If Possible. Move Your Most Valuable Possessions That You Can't Take with You To Higher Points Within Your Home

For Shelters

Take blankets or sleeping bags, flashlights, special dietary foods, infant needs and lightweight folding chairs.

Register every person arriving with you at the shelter.

Do not take pets, alcoholic beverages or weapons of any kind to shelters.

Be prepared to offer assistance to shelter workers if necessary, and stress to all family members their obligations to keep the shelter clean and sanitary.

Don't Travel Farther Than Necessary

Roads may be jammed. Don't let your stranded auto become your coffin.

Lock Windows and Doors

Turn off gas, water, electricity. Check to see that you have done everything to protect your property from damage and loss.

Carry Along Survival Supplies

- First Aid Kit;
- Canned or dried provisions, can opener, spoons, etc.;
- Bottled water;
- Extra family medication, prescriptions;
- Spare eyeglasses, hearing aid and batteries, if required.

Keep Important Papers with You at All Times

- Driver's License and other identification;

- Insurance policies;
- Property inventory;
- Medic-alert or device with special medical information.
- Maps to your destination

Take Warm Protective Clothing After the Hurricane

If you are evacuated, delay return until recommended or authorized by local authorities.

Beware of Outdoor Hazards

Watch out for loose or dangling power lines, and report them immediately, to proper authorities. Many lives are lost by electrocution.

Walk or Drive Cautiously

Debris-filled streets are dangerous. Snakes and poisonous insects may be a hazard. Washouts may weaken road and bridge structures which could collapse under vehicle weight.

Guard Against Spoiled Food

Food may spoil if refrigerator power is off more than a few hours. Freezers will keep food several days if doors are not opened after power failure but do not re-freeze food once it begins to thaw.

Do Not Use Water Until Safe

Use your emergency supply or boil water before drinking until official word that the water is safe. Report broken sewer or water mains to proper authorities.

Take Extra Precautions to Prevent Fire

Lowered water pressure in city and town water mains and the interruption of other services may make fire fighting extremely difficult after a hurricane.

THE RECOVERY

Insurance

Insurance representatives will be on the scene immediately following a major disaster to speed up the handling of claims. Notify your insurance agent or broker of any losses—and leave word where you can be contacted.

Take Steps to Protect Property

Make temporary repairs to protect property from further damage or looting. Use only reputable contractors (sometimes in the chaotic days following a disaster, unscrupulous operators will prey on the unsuspecting—check the Better Business Bureau. Keep all receipts for materials used.

Be Patient

Hardship cases will be settled first by insurance representatives. Don't assume your settlement will be the same as your neighbor's. Policy forms differ and storm damage is often erratic.

It Takes a Team Effort

Responsibility for the clean-up falls to numerous local, State and Federal agencies. A local disaster coordinator/director or his representative will be on hand to help residents in this effort.

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION,
1301 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, SUITE 501,
Washington, DC 20004-1701, July 22, 1998.

SENATOR JAMES INHOFE, *Chairman,*
SENATOR BOB GRAHAM, *Ranking Minority Member,*
Subcommittee on Clean Air, Wetlands, Private Property, and Nuclear Safety,
Committee on Environment and Public Works,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC 20510-6175.

DEAR SENATORS: The American Public Works Association strongly supports passage of the "Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act" and pledges to work with you to see that the provisions of that Act lead to effective predisaster mitigation programs. APWA has worked long and hard to raise awareness among stakeholders about the critical role of public works agencies and professionals in the disaster arena—not just in disaster clean up and repair, but also in

predisaster mitigation. We commend you for taking on this vitally important work on behalf of our cities and citizens.

The American Public Works Association is an international professional association of individuals, agencies and companies from the public and private sector dedicated to providing public works services of the highest possible quality to the communities they serve. APWA is the largest and oldest organization of its kind in the world with headquarters in Kansas City, Missouri, and over 26,000 members in 67 chapters throughout North America. APWA provides a forum in which public works professionals can exchange ideas, improve professional competencies, increase the efficiencies of their agencies and companies, and bring important public works-related topics to the public notice in local, State, and Federal arenas.

This Association has a long-standing relationship with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and will continue to work closely with that agency, as well as with the National League of Cities and other key stakeholders to develop and implement sensible, effective disaster mitigation programs.

For these reasons, we are especially supportive of provisions in the bill to:

- evaluate after 18 months the implementation of predisaster mitigation and make recommendations for a process to transfer more authority to States and localities for administering the program and a process for considering private sector predisaster mitigation initiatives;
- establish a cost estimation procedure to determine how much is being spent by Federal, State and local levels to respond to disasters, as well as how much is being spent on mitigation;
- have the OCC conduct a study to examine the effectiveness of this hazard mitigation program, including a review of its goals and objectives, the cost benefit in terms of mitigation, disaster avoidance, and dollars saved and report this to Congress within 3 years;
- have the OCC estimate the reduction in Federal disaster assistance resulting from implementation of the Act;
- determine the current and future availability of disaster insurance for public infrastructure; and
- examine analytically the major disasters and emergencies which have been declared since 1974, describing the implied criteria for these declarations and how they have changed over time, and make recommendations for appropriate future criteria that should be considered when making disaster and emergency declarations under the Stafford Act.

The American Public Works association plans to continue its role as a leader in disaster preparedness, and we believe this legislation is a key component in our efforts. We urge you to enact the "Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act."

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

ROBERT ALBEE, *President,*
American Public Works Association.

STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE FLOODPLAIN MANAGERS, INC.

The Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc., has enthusiastically supported predisaster mitigation efforts as the best and most effective means of reducing both disaster-related losses and costs. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is often cited as a fundamental predisaster mitigation measure in effect in nearly 19,000 jurisdictions. Our membership includes the NFIP State Coordinators and local officials who administer the program. We have direct experience with State and local economic, development and political considerations associated with reducing future flood losses.

The Association supports the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its efforts to promote mitigation as the key to breaking the build-damage-rebuild-damage again cycle to yield long-term benefits, including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program and the Project Impact initiative. We look forward to further developing appropriate roles for State floodplain and emergency management officials.

We respectfully suggest that the Subcommittee review and consider the report and commentary prepared by an ad hoc panel convened by FEMA. The report was submitted to the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations as required by the fiscal year 1998 appropriations measure. The report is a needs-based analysis and cost-effectiveness study of mitigation approaches. Importantly, the panel of experts developed a statement of principles and strategies that reflect the attributes

and priorities by which all predisaster mitigation alternatives should be measured. This is essential in any comprehensive long-term predisaster mitigation program. The panel's primary conclusion was that the "highest priority in mitigation efforts must be direct implementation at the local level."

ASFPM recognizes and appreciates the serious attention this Committee has given to examining mitigation a key to reducing disaster-related losses and to reducing the huge costs associated with natural disasters. We are pleased to have the opportunity to express overall support of the draft bill which has resulted from the examination. We would, however, like to offer some comments, concerns and suggestions which we hope will assist the Committee in achieving the important objectives of this proposed legislation.

Selected comments in order of appearance in the draft follow:

Sec. 103 Disaster Assistance Plans.

(d) Grants for Disaster Assistance and Hazard Identification

(1) Unfortunately, no requirement of a local predisaster mitigation plan is included. States should not be required to develop lists of specific projects, but instead should focus on establishing categories and mechanisms for identifying priorities. Development of specific mitigation plans should be done at the local level. Mitigation planning funds should support development of local mitigation plans.

(2) We question the inclusion of "testing and application of improved floodplain mapping technologies" as an eligible activity. Other mechanisms already exist by which FEMA engages in agreements, contracts and partnerships with the public and private sectors to cost-share development and testing of new floodplain mapping technologies. It is not appropriate to use this program to support new mapping technologies, especially since that would be likely to divert important funding support for State mitigation planning and action to private sector enterprise.

Sec. 203 Predisaster Hazard Mitigation.

(c) (1) Purpose of Assistance We recommend that mitigation planning be mentioned specifically as a necessary part of disaster mitigation, making it clear that planning is an eligible activity for grant support.

(e) (1-7) Criteria ASFPM believes that the articulation of criteria for project eligibility is important. The Association is particularly appreciative of (7) such other criteria as the President establishes in consultation and coordination with State and local governments. We look forward to working with the Federal and State governments to develop other helpful guidelines. An example of a suggestion we would make is that there should be a requirement that any community subject to flooding should be compliant with floodplain management requirements of the NFIP in order to be eligible.

(h) Local Governments

(2) "delegate the decisions to local governments" While we fully endorse the delegation of local plan decisionmaking to local officials, it is important that the President and State governments assist local governments through financial support and technical assistance. Locally developed and driven planning and implementation is key to successful mitigation, but often financial support and technical assistance is necessary.

We would urge adding language to specify that, "The President and the States shall assist local governments to develop and implement mitigation options and plans."

(i) Authorization of Appropriations

While we are very pleased to see the program authorized for a 5 year period, we note with concern that funding provided would decline in years 3, 4, and 5 of the authorized period. While the damage reduction resulting from mitigation can be expected to reduce need for predisaster mitigation efforts over time, it would certainly not be significantly reduced in 2 years or even 5 years. This is an important investment in future loss reduction, but significant results do require a constant level of funding.

We particularly applaud the Subcommittee language requiring evaluation of the impact of this legislation. We suggest that the authorized funding level not decrease, but that the Congress use the evaluation to make appropriate decisions about future program direction.

(j) Authorization of Section 404 Funds

ASFPM supports rolling in unobligated funds available under Section 404. Defining such funds by a 30 month cutoff of obligation may be too arbitrary. FEMA can rapidly become severely understaffed simply as a function of the magnitude and fre-

quency of disasters. It would be unfair to communities with applications pending under Section 404 to have those funds automatically evaporate simply because FEMA was unable to process paperwork. ASFPM suggests that the intent is good, but that FEMA should work with its partners to establish in regulation such a cutoff, with provision for extraordinary circumstances.

Establishment of Predisaster Mitigation Fund.

The Association believes that the process of using both appropriated funds and rolled in unobligated moneys from Section 404 points to the need for a separate Predisaster Mitigation Fund. This would permit accounting clarity for the President and the Congress in tracking funds supporting predisaster mitigation.

A new subsection (k) could establish a fund for providing grants under this section. The fund would be credited with appropriations (authorized under subsection (i) and already appropriated assistance under Section 404 of the Stafford Act (post-disaster mitigation assistance) that has not been obligated within a reasonable period to be determined by regulation.

Section 106. Interagency Task Force

ASFPM is enthusiastically supportive of coordinating implementation of predisaster mitigation through an Interagency Task Force. We are in full agreement with the Committee that this Task Force should be chaired by the FEMA Director.

Section 107. Maximum Contribution for Mitigation Costs

(a) In General

ASFPM fully agrees with the change to 20 percent.

Section 202. Assistance to Repair, Restore, Reconstruct, or Replace Damaged Facilities

(C) Large In-Lieu Contributions

If such "in-lieu" contributions are used, the recipient (State, local government or private nonprofit facility) should make certain that the contribution supports only restoration, expansion or construction that reduces or minimizes the hazard risk.

Section 208. Study Regarding Disaster Insurance for Public Infrastructure

ASFPM supports a GAO study of insurance for public infrastructure. We suggest that the study be broadened or a separate companion study be added to look at other aspects of reducing infrastructure damage and costs. An example would be evaluation of design and construction techniques in various parts of the country that have proven to be resistant to damage from natural hazards.

The companion study could be tasked with evaluating public infrastructure facilities located in declared disaster areas subject to flooding or other damage. The evaluation would identify and document design and construction elements that contributed to the ability of those facilities to withstand disaster damage. Public infrastructure facilities would include roads, bridges, culverts, water supply facilities, wastewater treatment plants, pump stations, distribution services for public utilities and recreational facilities.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Post-Flood Disaster Verification of Flood Hazard Maps

Often, actual floods point out the need to verify and improve flood hazard maps. In order to capture this "real world" verification, it is important for FEMA to be able to deploy resources and examine field information. The following language would give FEMA clear authority to do so in the post-disaster period.

Title IV (44 U.S.C. 55170a) is amended by adding at the end—

"(5) in areas affected by flooding, investigate the causes and extent of flooding to verify and improve available information and flood hazard mapping."

The Association of State Floodplain Managers, Inc. is pleased to have the opportunity to express its overall support of this Subcommittee's efforts to address the long term costs of disasters. ASFPM and its State chapters represent over 3,500 professionals engaged in all aspects of floodplain management and hazard mitigation. Our members work daily with cities, towns and counties that are struggling with pressure to build in flood hazard areas, working to rebuild more wisely after floods and planning to implement new programs and undertake mitigation projects.